

THE NEW WHITEHALL SERIES

# *The Foreign Office*

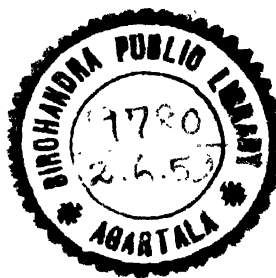
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## *Foreword*

THE present volume might properly be described as a book about the Foreign Service by the Foreign Service. The raw material for a good deal of it was assembled and cast into preliminary shape by two retired members of the Service. It was worked over as a whole and completed with the able and scholarly help of a present member of the Service. The draft was subjected to scrutiny by various experts and other readers in the Foreign Office, and further revised in the light of their comments and suggestions. These operations were carried out either at my direction or by myself; and to this extent I am responsible for the production of the book. But in its final form it is the work of several hands; and my responsibility for it should not be taken to mean that I fully share every one of the opinions expressed in it. Some of them are controversial; and there are some passages which, had they been in my own words, might have been expressed rather differently and perhaps more cautiously. I have thought it best, however, not to pass the steam-roller of official conformity over the more argumentative chapters of what must in large measure be a descriptive work; and I can confidently present it as giving a fair and comprehensive—and much-needed—picture of the Foreign Service, to which it has been my good fortune for so many years to belong.

S.





## Preface

FOR the sake of uniformity within the series to which it belongs—a series devoted to the British Departments of State severally—this book is entitled *The Foreign Office*. The title is not altogether unsuitable, for to most people the Foreign Office stands for the sum-total of British activity in the field of foreign affairs just as the Quai d'Orsay and the State Department represent the sum-total of French and American activities in the same field. Nevertheless it may be well to emphasise at the outset that the Foreign Office is, strictly speaking, merely one part of Her Majesty's Foreign Service, and that the purpose of this book is to describe the larger entity.

Here, too, a word of warning is necessary. It is much easier to describe what the Foreign Service is than to state what it does. The structure of the Foreign Office, though necessarily complex, is probably no more difficult to define than that of any other Department of State. Some of the functions of the Foreign Service, on the other hand, have a quality of apparent vagueness and real empiricism that defies plain definition. And this springs from the very nature of diplomacy. The great majority of the other Departments of State are simply the working instruments with which the British people regulates its own affairs.<sup>1</sup> Their primary function, that is, consists in carrying out the policies prescribed by Parliament and embodied in legislative acts. As a rule this is a straightforward administrative task presenting no insuperable difficulty, for the policies relate to a sphere in which their creators are not only well-informed but also sovereign. (It is true, of course, that some of the functions of the Home Departments, and notably those of the Board of Trade, lap over into spheres lying outside the sovereignty of the United Kingdom; but in so far as they do so, the Foreign Service takes a hand in the work that has to be done). If for example Her Majesty's Government, with the support of the Parliamentary majority of the day, decide that the school leaving age must be lowered, or that the postal rates must be raised, or that some other unwelcome thing must be done in the domain of internal affairs for reasons that seem to them good, execution of the decision follows almost as a matter of course. It may indeed call for much skill, tact and patience; it may meet with great opposition from the minority parties; it may

<sup>1</sup> This general definition is, of course, inapplicable to the Commonwealth Relations and Colonial Offices.

be impeded to some extent by unforeseen physical obstacles. But it seldom breaks down altogether, since it is the product of a long process of hard thinking by the originators of policy in a domain familiar to them, and since the responsible Department of State has the requisite legal authority and physical powers.

In foreign affairs, on the other hand, an altogether different situation obtains. Here indeed, no less than in other spheres, British policy is in the last analysis the product of the British people's wishes as expressed through the Parliamentary majority and the government of the day. But its execution depends on many factors that no British authority can fully foresee, let alone fully control. There are some seventy independent states in the world today, and at least one of them is directly concerned with any act designed to further British foreign policies. Very often quite a number of them are either directly concerned, or involved less directly through the operation of various forms of group agreement. It is therefore true to say, as a broad generalisation, that whereas the main function of the other British Departments of State is to carry out prescribed and fully realisable policies, that of the Foreign Office is to achieve as many of our national desiderata as can be made acceptable to other sovereign governments. This does not as a rule call for administrative science, but for diplomacy; and diplomacy, like all other arts, has a disconcerting tendency to elude scientific analysis.

While therefore an attempt will be made in later chapters of this book to give some account of the functions of the Foreign Service and of the British diplomatist's day-to-day activities, the reader should be warned at this early point that such things are far less susceptible of neat and clear-cut definition than the workings of the other Departments of State. The taxpayer has the right to know how his money is being spent; a part of it is allocated to the Foreign Service; and of this allocation a part again is devoted to things which, to the uninitiated, look like unnecessary luxuries and antiquated ritual. It is very desirable that the need for these things should be widely understood; but it cannot be understood without a real effort of imagination. The taxpayer will readily believe, for example, that Scotland Yard cannot do without a good deal of expensive scientific apparatus for his protection from criminals. Not only is such apparatus no unnecessary luxury; it also does not look like one. He will find it much harder to see why the British diplomatist (addressed by the title of 'Excellency') should sometimes appear in public loaded with gold braid and crowned with ostrich plumes, and must spend such a large part of his time on official ceremonies, social receptions and the like. Later it will be explained in some detail why in fact he does so, but here two general principles

will be merely stated without comment : first, that diplomacy, being an art of accommodation and persuasion, cannot afford to attempt the imposition of any one purely national pattern of life upon the international environment in which it functions; and secondly, that the world in general, despite all the hard-headed reformers and innovators, is still very largely influenced both by social ceremonial and by what is sometimes called 'the personal touch'.



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PART ONE

*A Preliminary Sketch*





## CHAPTER I

### *The Nature and Functions of the Foreign Service in Broad Outline*

THE Service falls naturally into two main divisions: the Foreign Office at home, and the establishments abroad. These last, again, are of two main kinds: diplomatic and consular. Of the difference between diplomatic and consular duties no more need be said at this point than that for the most part—though with certain important exceptions—consular officers deal with provincial and municipal authorities rather than with central governments in capital cities, and are less concerned with general political relations than with furthering British trade and looking after the individual interests of British subjects and firms. To some extent the Foreign Office may be regarded as the headquarters of British diplomatic activity and the establishments abroad as the front lines through which it operates. This, however, is only true in part. Since diplomacy is organised on a reciprocal basis, diplomatic business with foreign governments may be, and often is, conducted between the Foreign Office and the foreign diplomatic and consular representatives serving in the United Kingdom; and where this method is followed the Department may be said to be its own front line.

But whichever of these two methods is adopted in a given case—and at a later stage reference will be made to the factors governing choice between them—the function is, of course, basically the same. As already indicated, the primary task of the Foreign Service is to carry out wherever possible and as far as possible the foreign policies laid down by the British people, as represented by the Parliamentary majority, the Government deriving from that majority, the Cabinet heading the Government, and the Foreign Secretary as the specialist within the Cabinet. And the chief specific method of carrying them out is negotiation with foreign governments and international bodies.

Negotiation, however, is too narrow a term for what the diplomatist is called upon to do. Not content with transacting items of international business as they crop up, he must be constantly preparing the ground. For this, he must maintain close contact with the authorities and personalities of the state in which he serves (or with his foreign colleagues on the international body); expounding cogently but tactfully the general and particular points of view of

his own country; listening patiently and sympathetically when they expound theirs; correcting misunderstandings and wherever possible forestalling them; and so on. His chances of success in isolated transactions will depend largely on the care and skill that he brings to these wider duties, which may even be regarded as the main reason for his employment. Others than he may occasionally be sent out to negotiate specific items of international business—particularly where the subject-matter is highly technical. He, however, constitutes in his own person a kind of clearing-house for the whole complex of relations between two countries or between his country and an international body; and his chief value, in these days of peripatetic negotiating missions, lies precisely in the personal relationships that he is able to build up through not being peripatetic. International business rests for the most part on a basis of hard and seemingly impersonal facts. Nevertheless it is always in the last analysis business between groups of human beings, and consequently there is always at the centre of it a very important point of personal contact. The diplomatist lives at this point, and it is his job to ensure that the contact is as friendly—or, at the least, as calmly reasonable—as individual personality and tact can make it. He is often described as a soft buffer between hard substances; and often he himself feels acutely the aptness of this description. But in fact his rôle, as summarised above, will be seen to be a much more active and positive one than that.

Clearly there can be no sound foreign policy without accurate information on which to base it; and it is consequently one of the principal duties of the Foreign Service to supply such information. There are indeed many other sources of supply, and all of them are tapped to some extent in the formulation of policy. The Foreign Service, however, may reasonably be regarded as the most reliable of them all, for it is a highly-trained body accustomed to scrutinise and assess the trends of the outside world and enjoying the advantages of direct official access to the leaders of that world.

Mere information, however, is not sufficient for the formulation of sound policies. If the facts supplied are to be useful to an always overworked Foreign Secretary and Cabinet, they must be concisely summarised and commented on. It is not enough that the makers of policy should be told baldly of current happenings abroad: an estimate of the underlying reasons for these happenings is also required. Let us suppose, for example, that in some foreign country which is usually well disposed towards us there is a sudden outbreak of anti-British demonstrations and a virulent anti-British press campaign. How serious these happenings may be for British interests, and what action on our part they may call for, will depend

largely on what lies behind them; and very often this is not at all easy to discover. It may be that the demonstrations and unfriendly newspaper articles are the symptom of some real grievance felt by the nation as a whole: we may have hurt its susceptibilities or material interests in some way because we could not help doing so. We may, for instance, have upset its export business by a protective tariff made necessary by the state of our own internal markets. Or we may have voted against it, impelled to do so by long-established traditions and principles, on some question submitted to the decision of the United Nations. Such causes as these will be fairly easy to diagnose in a broad and general way, but an accurate and balanced diagnosis will still be useful. The trouble may, on the contrary, be due to some tangled chain of misunderstanding that can be straightened out by official explanations and suitable publicity. It may even be due to quite trivial and sordid factors, such as the resentment of a vain and powerful politician at some imaginary slight or some mildly unfavourable comment in a British newspaper. Very often it will prove to be the complex product of a number of such factors, some evident, others hidden. The British diplomatic mission, when reporting on the visible symptoms, is naturally expected to give its estimate of their underlying causes. The Foreign Office, again, enjoying as it does a much wider perspective of world affairs, must give its own assessment, endorsing or modifying that of the British representative on the spot. In the upshot, the report and accompanying minutes that reach the Foreign Secretary from his Department are unavoidably in the nature of a recommendation, even where none is made in terms. And usually he will want a definite recommendation, though he is in no way bound to accept it and act upon it.

In the hypothetical case given above a diplomatic mission is called upon to supply information, comment and advice on a specific happening, the flaring up of a plainly-visible crisis. But a large part of the analytical reporting done by our missions abroad relates to things less easily recognised and defined—to trends, political and other, which are not at all obvious and can be assessed only by patient and prolonged observation. Such long-term reporting is of at least equal value: it will often foreshadow happenings of the more positive and spectacular sort, and it provides the Department at home with much-needed background material.

In this sense, then, the Foreign Service undoubtedly contributes its part to the making of policy. It could not do otherwise in view of its specialised knowledge and experience. Nevertheless, many common misconceptions about the conduct of foreign affairs would be removed if it were more generally understood that the Foreign

Service, and more especially the Foreign Office, is basically not so much a maker of policy as an instrument for its execution. It does not, that is, seek to impose its own ideas in disregard of the democratic principle of ministerial and parliamentary control over national action; though it does supply, in marshalled and digested form, the bulk of those facts on which alone sound policy can be based, and gives its own opinions on the courses of action which the facts make necessary or indicate as desirable.

As stated above, the Foreign Office has the duty of endorsing or modifying the recommendations of British representatives abroad. This is partly because there is scarcely any question that concerns Great Britain and one other country exclusively: countries other than these two ('third powers', to use a term, that is useful though perhaps logically indefensible) are almost always affected to some extent and in a manner more or less direct. Even so seemingly simple and exclusively bilateral a matter as the negotiation of an agreement defining the frontier between some British African colony and a neighbouring power will usually be found to raise questions of principle that have to be decided in relation to frontier problems elsewhere. It may be, for example, that this frontier lies in desert country and that most of the wells are on our side. The tribes on the other side are, as it happens, unarmed and well-behaved; they used these wells long before we came to Africa; the state to which they belong is well disposed towards us and has no aggressive designs. Both humanity and common sense therefore prompt us to allow these tribes to water their flocks on our side of the line at some seasons of the year and on certain conditions designed to prevent trouble with our own tribesmen. Can we do so? Probably we can, and the British diplomatic representative on the spot naturally urges that we should. But in considering whether in fact we can, we must remember that we shall be creating a precedent; and that at the other end of Africa we may be trying before long to negotiate a frontier settlement with a troublesome neighbour whose tribes are armed and aggressive. Consequently we cannot afford to consider in isolation even so apparently straightforward a problem as this. The head of a British mission abroad is of course expected to keep himself informed as far as possible of world developments, and not merely of local ones; and to offer advice in the light of his general knowledge. But his main concern is to promote good relations with the country in which he is serving, and his attitude is inevitably biased by this in some degree. Only the Foreign Office, with its comprehensive viewpoint, is in a position to correct such bias.

• For this, procedures of co-ordination within the Foreign Office



itself are required, since the Office is nowadays a large organisation comprising a great number of specialised departments. But much external co-ordination is also necessary. Scarcely any question relating to foreign affairs is exclusively political. Often it has financial and economic aspects of greater or less importance to the Treasury and the Board of Trade. It may indirectly raise problems of military strategy in which the Chiefs of Staff and the Ministry of Defence are greatly interested. It may, in short, be of concern to a number of Government Departments other than the Foreign Office. Hence in considering and formulating its advice to the Foreign Secretary the Foreign Office must keep in close touch with the other interested Departments in London. The Foreign Secretary for his part will be in touch with the Ministers in charge of these other Departments when he discusses a particular aspect of foreign policy in the Cabinet; but a great deal of consultation and co-ordinating work between the permanent officials concerned must precede this final stage if the advice that he receives from his own Department is to be sound advice. Co-ordination on a large scale with many other governmental organisations not of Ministry status, and with non-governmental bodies of various kinds, is also very often needed.

With some Departments of State the need for co-ordination is, in the nature of things, much greater than with others. Thus the policies of the Ministry of Education are seldom of direct concern to the Foreign Office. Those of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries sometimes are, since, for example, disputes about fishing rights in territorial waters and about the permissible extent of these waters are unhappily common. The treatment accorded to aliens in this country is naturally a matter of extreme interest to the Foreign Office, and one that calls for close interdepartmental co-ordination; but it is only one small corner of the field covered by the Home Office. With the Board of Trade, on the other hand, there is inevitably an immense area of shared interests, since foreign trade is the country's life-blood; and special mechanisms exist for ensuring adequate consultation and joint operations in this field. Similarly with the Ministry of Defence and the Service Departments—the Admiralty, the War Office and the Air Ministry: there are many political questions in the domain of foreign affairs that affect them to a greater or less extent, and therefore co-ordination on an elaborate scale is constantly required. Lastly—and obviously—the Treasury is interested not only in almost every Foreign Service activity connected with foreign trade, economics and finance, but also, as paymaster, in many aspects of the internal organisation of the Service itself.

In one field of foreign affairs the Foreign Service works partly by

its own means and partly through other governmental and non-governmental agencies. This is the field of publicity in the widest sense. International publicity is of two main types. There is political publicity (generalised and forward-looking in varying degree, but designed chiefly to influence people abroad on specific and current controversies); and there is long-term cultural publicity designed to make known and respected the general achievements and way of life of the country conducting it. The first of these types of publicity falls partly within the sphere of action of the Foreign Service itself: there is, for example, a department of the Foreign Office (the News Department) which maintains close relations with the British press and the foreign newspaper correspondents in London; and all the larger British diplomatic missions abroad maintain whole-time 'information officers' for similar purposes. (At the smaller missions, where for reasons of economy there are no such officers, the work of maintaining contact with the local press and foreign correspondents is performed by a member or members of the staff as a part-time but important job). There are also departments of the Foreign Office which collaborate with other government services in the compiling of publicity material and its dissemination both through Foreign Service information officers abroad and through organisations at home such as the Central Office of Information.

The second main type of publicity mentioned above—the long-term cultural type—is primarily the responsibility of the British Council, which is a chartered corporation and thus strictly speaking not a governmental organisation, but is at present financed almost entirely from public funds. These funds derive from the votes of three Departments of State but predominantly from that of the Foreign Office. The Foreign Secretary is responsible to Parliament for the Council's affairs in general, and also for the details of its business where these do not relate to the domain of the other two Departments (the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office). The Foreign Office interest in the Council's work is in fact paramount, and a special department within the Office exists mainly to ensure adequate contact and co-ordination (though it has other duties connected with the cultural activities of various international bodies). There is also, of course, the closest co-operation between the Council's representatives abroad and the diplomatic missions and consulates.

These publicity agencies perform what has become an indispensable function in international life. By them, the British electors, through the national press, are kept informed on matters of fact in foreign affairs and on developments in British foreign policy, on the principle that the more enlightened the electorate is, the sounder its

judgment should be. By them again, the public in foreign countries is furnished with expositions and explanations of British policy. In the countries most friendly to us, such publicity is, more often than not, welcomed rather than otherwise by the foreign governments concerned; and indeed, in some countries, a reduction in our publicity work or in the activities of the British Council has been regarded as wounding to the national *amour propre*.

But this is not the whole story. When political publicity moves into the field of propaganda, it risks becoming what may fairly be called a necessary evil: necessary, because we cannot afford to dispense with weapons so extensively used by other powers; an evil, because it often tends to hamper the primary function of diplomacy—which is the quiet and friendly settlement of international differences by intergovernmental discussion and negotiation, facilitated by good personal contacts and understanding. However careful the political publicist may be to state his own country's case without directly attacking the ideals and aims of others, his activities are, in the nature of things, sometimes repugnant to the foreign governments affected by them. He by-passes these governments by addressing himself directly to their peoples. And although his main object may be to secure friendly comprehension, rather than actual adoption, of his own country's ideals, the very fact that he expounds them so loudly and publicly must inevitably tend to suggest a proselytising motive. The broadening of democratic control over foreign policy makes it inevitable that publicity should impinge with ever-increasing force upon the field of inter-governmental diplomacy; and to many people this seems right as well as inevitable. In subsequent chapters something will be said about the highly controversial and widely-misunderstood topic usually labelled 'the old diplomacy and the new'. For the present it is merely emphasised as a fact that strictly official contact between governments, attended by as little publicity and infused with as much mutual confidence as possible, is still—and is likely to remain—the chief and preferred method of the Foreign Service in attempting to perform the duties with which it is charged. This preference is dictated not by obscurantism, but by plain common sense.

The Foreign Service has one function that differs markedly from all others because it is administrative in character. It exercises administrative control, for certain limited purposes, over a number of territories for which, though they are not parts of the Commonwealth nor British protectorates, Great Britain is in some degree responsible by virtue of international treaties. Chief among these has hitherto been the Sudan—a region nearly as large as the Indian sub-continent though with a very much smaller population. Though the Sudanese

are about to achieve self-determination, it is justifiable to mention here what has been till now, and still is at the moment of writing, a Foreign Office task of no little importance. The British Foreign Service as such has never, of course, performed the work of administering this vast territory internally: that has been done by a corps of mainly British officials constituting a service in itself—and enjoying, incidentally, a very high reputation for professional devotion and integrity unclouded by national prejudices. But the Governor-General of the Sudan, who stands at the head of this service, has been answerable direct to the Foreign Secretary in so far as he has acted for the British element of the Anglo-Egyptian 'condominium'; and the Foreign Office has been responsible (in theory, jointly with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, though latterly Egypt has professed to regard the condominium as dead) for the conduct of the territory's external relations in matters both large and small. There are other Foreign Service responsibilities, less important but continuing, of a roughly similar sort. In the Persian Gulf, for instance, the Service conducts the foreign relations of several Arab sheikhdoms and administers for them such of their judicial processes as affect foreigners.

In a rather different category again, since its work is neither administrative nor diplomatic in the normal sense, is the British Middle East Office—an organisation run by the Foreign Service, with the assistance of a number of non-Service experts, mainly in order to supply advice and technical help, when these things are asked for, to some of the countries of Hither Asia and Africa in a wide field of economic and sociological problems. It is also responsible for co-ordinating the views of Her Majesty's Representatives in the Middle East, particularly on problems of this nature.

But foreign affairs today are no longer exclusively the relations between individual independent states. Most of the seventy-odd states of the world are members of the United Nations; and, although the things about which they actively differ are still far more apparent than the things about which they agree, the whole conception of the United Nations postulates in theory an appreciable surrender of absolute sovereignty by each member in the interests of general harmony. If the ideals for which the United Nations stand could ever be realised in their entirety, the points of friction between individual states might well be so far reduced as to remove a great weight of work and responsibility from their respective foreign services. After all, the fundamental task of diplomacy of the genuine sort is to prevent war (though it has certainly many other and more positive aims than that); and in the world-order of the future, as envisaged by the internationally-minded, there will be scarcely more possibility of war



between one national state and another than there is today of war between, say, Michigan and Ohio. Actual federation on a world-wide scale there may not be (it is not, of course, envisaged in the United Nations Charter, though for many idealists it represents the ultimate aim); but it is at least intended that world public opinion, as expressed in the United Nations, should acquire sufficient suasive force to make the resort to war almost unthinkable.

We need not and should not regard this prospect with cynicism. It may well be attained some day, provided that a major disaster due to the misuse of atomic and other weapons can be averted during the intervening years; and it is very much to be desired. We ourselves are indeed already working towards the same ultimate goal not only in the general councils of the United Nations, but also by subsidiary and related methods. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is at present no more than a regional nucleus of inter-state collaboration; but for all that it does constitute already, with its unified military command and widening membership, the potential framework for a system in which the risk of war between the component parts would be very greatly diminished, if not indeed completely eliminated. And the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is not, of course, the only current experiment designed to mitigate the dangers inherent in absolute national sovereignty.

The day may thus come when the British Foreign Service, called upon to play a less important rôle than it does now, can be reduced in size. Unfortunately for the taxpayer, however, that day is still far off. And meanwhile the very existence of institutions such as the United Nations and N.A.T.O., the very furtherance of schemes designed to bring about a world-order in which there would be less need for diplomacy as we now know it, enormously increase the volume of Foreign Service work. Nowadays many important questions calling for settlement between the United Kingdom and foreign countries have to be dealt with in at least two distinct ways: by direct negotiation with the countries concerned; and by debate, official negotiation and unofficial lobbying within the framework of the United Nations. This is not by any means to say that the present multiplicity of channels of negotiation necessarily hinders that peaceful settlement of disputes which is the proper goal of all diplomacy. On the contrary, it is often of definite assistance; and, at the worst, mere cognizance by the United Nations of a dispute usually affords some measure of insurance against actual warfare. But the fact remains that the mechanism of negotiation is enormously complicated by the need to work through so many channels. This may be merely an uncomfortable passing phase of growth, but it certainly will not pass soon.

The Foreign Service is naturally the chief instrument for conducting the relations between Her Majesty's Government and international bodies; and for this purpose its organisation is broadly similar to that for dealing with individual foreign countries. Foreign Service permanent delegations, corresponding roughly in structure and function to ordinary diplomatic missions, are attached to the headquarters of the United Nations and the other main international bodies; and there are specialised departments of the Foreign Office whose function it is to handle in London, as co-ordinators both inside and outside the Office, all the political and much of the economic and technical business relating to these bodies. The primary responsibility for a part of the economic and technical work relating to international organisations (and notably for work connected with the twelve Specialised Agencies of the United Nations) falls on Departments of State other than the Foreign Office; and in these fields the Foreign Service has no more than a secondary co-ordinating rôle to play. But even this rôle is fairly important and extensive in terms of the man-power required to perform it. For the handling of technical matters the Foreign Service delegations abroad are of course assisted and reinforced by experts from other Departments.

Apart from this sharing of specialised work and responsibility with other Departments of State, there is a secondary but important difference between the method of handling business with individual foreign countries and that employed in dealing with international bodies. The main debates in the United Nations, and the main conferences of such bodies as N.A.T.O., are attended whenever possible by the Foreign Secretary himself or by one of his Parliamentary deputies; thus short-circuiting to some extent the procedure, normal elsewhere, of representation abroad by non-political career diplomats. Nowadays of course the speed of air communications makes it possible for the Foreign Secretary to travel extensively, and he may at any time visit the capital of a foreign state in order to deal personally and on the spot with some aspect or aspects of the relations between that state and Great Britain. But this practice is still exceptional, whereas the presence of the Secretary of State or one of his Parliamentary deputies at the main deliberations of the international organisations has become the rule.

From what has been said so far, it might appear perfectly safe to conclude that the purview of the Foreign Office embraced the whole complex of intergovernmental relationships (together with some that are not intergovernmental) between the autonomous national entities which make up the political world today. This would certainly hold without need for qualification if one were writing (for example)

of the American State Department; but it is not in fact strictly true of the Foreign Office. The Department responsible for our relations with the other members of the Commonwealth—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, India, Pakistan and Ceylon—is the Commonwealth Relations Office. Relations with these countries are conducted by the Commonwealth Secretary, either direct with the Commonwealth Minister concerned or through the official representatives, known as High Commissioners, exchanged with them. The reasons for this are of course that the Commonwealth countries overseas, though independent sovereign countries, are in a special relationship with the United Kingdom, as members of a family to which we ourselves belong; and that the proper sphere of the Foreign Office is the outside world beyond the family.

One of the features of this special Commonwealth relationship is a mutual understanding on the part of all members of the Commonwealth to consult one another on matters of common concern. In accordance with this understanding there is close liaison on all questions of foreign affairs through the intermediary of the Commonwealth Relations Office. Information is extensively pooled; and the Foreign Office in London, as the oldest-established and largest of the Commonwealth ministries of foreign affairs, plays a full part in this by providing summaries of its own information and views. There is, moreover, one form of direct contact maintained by members of the (United Kingdom) Foreign Service, and it is of very great practical value: in many capitals abroad the diplomatic corps includes representatives of one or more Commonwealth Governments other than Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and between all the Commonwealth diplomatic colleagues serving together at one post there is close personal collaboration.

To complete this part of the picture it should be mentioned that a number of officers from the Foreign Service are at present employed in some of the other Commonwealth capitals. These, however, are officers serving on secondment to the Commonwealth Relations Office and under the United Kingdom High Commissioners.

It is the Commonwealth Relations Office, too, and not the Foreign Office, that is responsible for relations with the Irish Republic. The reason for this is that when the Irish Republic left the Commonwealth it was agreed that it should not be treated as a foreign country, and it was therefore considered appropriate that relations with it should continue to be handled by the Commonwealth Relations Office.

In the foregoing preliminary account, necessarily cursory and incomplete, of what the Foreign Service is and does, mention has so

far been made only of the principal *active* functions that it is called upon to perform in trying to carry out the policies of Her Majesty's Government and hence ultimately of the British people. The Service reports facts and offers comment and advice about them; it negotiates, either at home or abroad, with foreign governments; it maintains an elaborate system of co-ordination with the other Departments of State on questions of foreign affairs in which they are concerned; it conducts, with outside help, the relations between Her Majesty's Government and a number of international bodies; it performs one kind of publicity work by its own means, and closely supervises another; it has certain administrative and advisory duties in various parts of the world; and so on. There is however a further function of the Service that might almost be described as static but is none the less of very great importance. It devolves chiefly upon the diplomatic and consular establishments abroad, and is usually known as the representational function. This awkward official word (which will be used elsewhere for want of a better) is also perhaps rather misleading to the uninitiated, suggesting as it does merely 'top hat' and 'white tie' duties—attendance and speech-making at official ceremonies, banquets and the like. It does mean that, but also much more than that. It is, in a far wider sense, the worthy representation by Foreign Service officers of their Sovereign, their government and their country. It has been called static because, though often strenuous and exacting, it is more a matter of being than of doing. But it involves travel about the foreign country in which the officer is stationed whenever time allows; for nowhere abroad can a full picture of the national life be obtained in the capital city alone, and in many lands the provincial centres are of great political importance. It is, in short, the human and social side of the Foreign Service officer's life, as opposed to the business side (often known as the paper work, though diplomatic business involves much oral discussion as well as writing). The attempt to describe it will be reserved for later chapters, but it must be emphasised here that it is of cardinal importance in the general scheme of Foreign Service activities.

In the main, as already stated, the representational function falls to the diplomatic missions and consular establishments abroad. Manifestly it must. But there is a counterpart to it at home. The senior officials of the Foreign Office are not exempt from social duties of the diplomatic sort, for their contacts with the foreign diplomatists serving in London must of course be personal as well as official if the best results are to be achieved and the friendliest relations maintained. A specialised organisation is also needed within the Foreign Office in order to look after the Diplomatic Corps physi-

cally—to ensure that it receives the privileges and immunities to which it is entitled, to guide it through Court and other official ceremonies, and so on—and in order to advise and help those whose duty it is to entertain and generally shepherd the unending stream of high-ranking foreigners who come to London on visits, more or less official.

Thus far we have been concerned with what the Service is and does in relation to the outside world. But it must also organise and administer itself internally, and this is no light task. It works in almost every quarter of the globe and thus in a great variety of physical conditions. If its members are to do their jobs properly they must receive adequate salaries together with allowances based on the local cost of living, and must be provided for in a great many other ways. The buildings in which they work, and those in which official entertaining is done as part of their duties as representatives, must be maintained in decent repair. They must have adequate means of transport. Their health, in climates of all sorts, must be cared for as far as it is possible to do so. They must be helped to get their children properly educated. They must be allowed to come home on leave at fairly regular intervals, not only for reasons of health but also in order that they may remain in sufficiently close touch with their own country, and this requires much careful planning if the work of the establishments at which they serve is to be carried on smoothly. From time to time they must be transferred efficiently from post to post, to fill the vacancies due to promotion and other causes, and also because it is undesirable on general principles that they should remain very long in one country. Then, too, the Service cannot function properly without a system of communications which must be both rapid and safe, yet as economical as ingenuity can make it. All these things, and many more which need not be enumerated here, call for the maintenance of a complex apparatus of internal administration. The work in this field is not indeed productive in the ordinary sense: it is not primarily business with the outside world (though it does inevitably entail countless transactions with home Departments such as the Treasury and the Ministry of Works). But the Foreign Service, like all other institutions and organisms, must of course devote a good deal of its time and energies to the task of looking after itself if externally productive work is to be competently done.

## CHAPTER II

### *Why the Service has Grown*

THE foregoing preliminary outline will have made it clear that the present functions of the Foreign Service are numerous and complicated. As will be shown later with figures, its size and cost today are very small in relation to the size of the Home Civil Service and the total budgetary expenses of Her Majesty's Government. Nevertheless until quite recent times they were very much smaller than they are now. In 1914, for example, the Foreign Office still numbered only 176 persons all told (including some forty doorkeepers, office cleaners and the like). The missions abroad were also, by modern standards, minute: the Diplomatic and Consular Services, at that time separate cadres, comprised only 446 persons between them, and less than 150 of these were career diplomatists. The cost of running the whole Service at home and abroad was just under one million pounds. Today the total staff of the Foreign Service, as calculated for budgetary purposes, numbers over ten thousand (see p. 56), and the annual cost of running the Service is in the neighbourhood of seventeen million pounds (see pp. 64-5). It is therefore worth while to consider why the expansion has come about. Has the business of conducting foreign relations really changed so much during the last few decades? Is it certain that bureaucracy has not, in this instance as allegedly in so many others, merely bred?

In attempting to answer these questions we shall not give even an outline of the history of diplomacy itself, but shall try merely to indicate the main reasons why the field, and consequently the apparatus, of specifically British diplomacy have become so wide and complicated. And since the changes which concern us here have taken place mainly within the last few decades there is no need to delve back very far into the past.

We are nowadays inclined, and not without reason, to look back nostalgically upon the century between the Congress of Vienna and the first world war as a period during most of which British statesmen had much less cause than those of our own day to feel anxious about the course of foreign affairs. It was a period of exceptional prosperity for ourselves; and during the greater part of it our wealth and naval strength made the conduct of our external relations, if not indeed easy, at least much easier than it is now. Wars there were in plenty; but none of the wars in which we were involved during the

Victorian period came near to threatening the integrity of the metropolitan territory, or placed a really heavy strain on our financial resources, or even seriously checked the general development of our overseas trade. If the Victorian horizons were seldom unclouded, they were usually much less black than ours. Yet although there was in general far more public optimism then than there is now, those responsible for the conduct of our foreign relations felt the burden of office weigh heavily upon them.

Every successive generation tends to take its own troubles seriously, indeed tragically, and to feel that it is on the brink of calamity. The less hardened it is by real adversity, the larger its minor troubles automatically expand to fill its capacity for dismay.

The memoirs of nineteenth century statesmen are full of anxieties and forebodings about foreign affairs; and the reasons they had were neither unreal nor unsubstantial. Some of these ministers not only worried greatly, but also considered themselves overworked and indeed almost overwhelmed by the foreign problems they were called upon to handle. Palmerston was, and had to be, in Graham Wallas's words, 'a magnificent administrative athlete.' But it is one measure of the relative simplicity and straightforwardness of foreign problems in those times that those who had the handling of them were so few. However competent and energetic the foreign secretaries of the Victorian era may have been by the standards of their time—and most of them were undoubtedly both—the fact that they were able to manage their business at all with a small and primitive departmental apparatus speaks for itself. They may not have felt either unhurried or unharassed; but they did contrive, and usually within the limits of a quite reasonable working day, to control personally the whole machinery of British external relations. They had scarcely any Civil Service advisers, and employed a clerical staff which would nowadays be regarded as totally inadequate—in methods and training, if not in numbers—for one major diplomatic mission.

Yet nothing in the world during this long period from the Vienna Congress to the assassinations at Sarajevo was wholly static; and our Imperial interests were such that very few developments abroad could leave us completely indifferent. Indeed from about 1900 onwards the factors that were destined to bring the catastrophe about were already becoming apparent and were a cause of fully justified alarm amongst those whose business it was to assess them. This alarm, and consequent increase in the pressure of work, did bring about various reforms and staff increases in the British Foreign Service of the time. Yet the total staff was still very small when the war broke out. In point of fact it was dangerously so for the needs of the time. But it did, for all that, manage to cope more

or less with the problems which beset it. There must have been good reasons for this; and the reasons must be at least partly to seek in other things than the relative tranquillity of the years before 1914.

The two world wars have, quite obviously, made British diplomatic tasks far more numerous, and also more difficult, than they once were. It could not be otherwise in an age when the world is divided ideologically into two hostile camps; when naval power and the English Channel no longer provide us with the full protection they once did; when we are no longer the best-equipped country in the world, either in naval strength or in money; when our national livelihood depends perhaps more than ever before on good trading relations with foreign countries; when nationalism is rampant in many parts of the world; and so on. But these all-too evident causes of trouble and complication are only half the picture. It is not only that diplomacy nowadays has to handle international problems which are much more numerous and more harassing in themselves; its methods of handling them have also changed and become far more complex.

Although the world was by no means static during the century before 1914, there were undoubtedly many elements then making for stability in British foreign policy which have since ceased to apply. At that time, that policy, by almost universal consent of the governed, was constantly directed towards a single major objective. It was widely accepted as axiomatic that the country's salvation and progress lay in the preservation of what was known as the balance of power. This was a predominantly European balance, for Europe in those days still led the world. And in practice the accepted formula meant simply that we must strive by all possible means—and in the first place by diplomatic means—to prevent the emergence of a continental power strong enough to threaten us with invasion through the Low Countries or to bar us from the route to India. There might be, and quite often was, internal disagreement concerning the best means of doing this. But there was no disagreement as to the need for doing it by one means or another. The result was that British foreign policy was but little hampered by internal discussion of what its guiding thread should be, and could pursue a steady course.

This guiding thread in British foreign policy was already old at the time of the Congress of Vienna. We continued to hold fast to it right up to 1914. It is arguable that we ought to try to hold fast to it still, despite the emergence of many fresh problems of the first magnitude; but from 1918 onwards, for reasons by no means wholly sound, large sections of the public began to look askance at the old formula which had served us so well for so long. It was often



assumed that it had been the policy itself, and not our eventual failure to maintain it successfully, that had led to the catastrophe.

During the first half of the hundred-year period which started with the Vienna Congress we were greatly helped by the fact that continental Europe strove on its own account, and with some success for a while, to keep itself in political balance. The Vienna settlement, and the alliances of the great Powers of that time, supplemented at first by Castlereagh's ideas of diplomacy by conference and by the Emperor Alexander's more questionable plans for the collaboration of Christian princes, were designed to preserve the existing political order in Europe by peaceful means, and above all by diplomatic conferences among the major Powers which formed the alliances. For that reason they have been described by some as the forerunners of modern 'conference diplomacy' and of the League of Nations. The system which they formed was far from ideal. It was dictated mainly by self-interest of a not very enlightened kind. In many countries it militated against social progress. But it did at least tend to preserve the peace of the world while it lasted; and for the most part it dovetailed very conveniently with our own basic national policy of maintaining the balance of power.

During the latter half of the same period the so-called 'Concert of Europe' was gradually superseded. Europe came to be divided into two camps; and we ourselves were eventually compelled by Germany's maladroitness and threatening policy to join one of them, though we succeeded for a long time in holding aloof. But despite growing difficulties our basic policy remained unchanged. There is no need here to discuss at length the merits and demerits of this or other past British policies; nor even to describe them, except in so far as this may be necessary in order to show the development of diplomatic complexity. The policy of the balance of power may, at some stage in the 1815-1914 period, have become a misguided policy through becoming increasingly difficult to realise. What matters here is simply that, because it was an accepted and standing policy, the processes of diplomatic execution were greatly simplified. In all British diplomatic business there was a touchstone, a definite orientation.

Less work was done in those days by foreign ministries and diplomats than ought to have been done, and the work that was done tended to be rather superficial. In Great Britain, at any rate, there was but little public recognition of these deficiencies, and no serious agitation either to expand the diplomatic apparatus or to improve its quality. The second of these reforms would have required an increase in public expenditure no less than the first, since it would have meant ceasing to employ those people who could, and largely

did, pay their official expenses out of their own pockets. During the first half of the nineteenth century the public service as a whole was too often, as a modern historian has unkindly recalled, the 'outdoor relief department of the aristocracy'; and the Civil Service was the sanctuary of 'the unambitious, and the indolent or incapable.' The Diplomatic Service and Foreign Office were no doubt not entirely immune from the habits of the time. But Foreign Office clerks seem not to have been lacking in assiduity or alertness. Palmerston himself worked extremely hard and made his young men work hard too, at the menial tasks which in those days fell to their lot. He expected them to be at their desks on Sundays, if business required. When he left the Foreign Office in 1834, he expressed to his staff his 'sense of the indefatigable zeal and unwearied cheerfulness with which they have, during the last four years, gone through the unusual labour and submitted to the excessive confinement arising out of the extraordinary pressure of public business'. Clarendon, when he left office in 1866, said of the Foreign Office: 'I am certain there is no department in the country where public business is conducted with the same zeal and completeness, or where confidence is repaid by such perfect integrity and honour'.<sup>1</sup>

It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that the public service as we know it began to grow up. For long, the governmental apparatus both at home and in the foreign service remained insufficiently equipped as well as too small. Diplomacy was not invaded on a really large scale by economic and similar problems till after 1914; but long before that date there had been important economic and financial factors in international relations of which both the makers of British foreign policy and the diplomatists who handled it were often unaware.

Even if British diplomacy had been technically better equipped throughout the century before 1914, its methods would still have been a great deal more rough-and-ready than they are today, for the simple reason that the sum-total of professional knowledge about foreign affairs was much less than it is now. In 1815, as in 1918, the negotiators representing the great powers made many radical changes in the political map of Europe. New frontiers were created; wide territories changed hands. At Vienna the principal negotiators were, by the standards of their day, at least as well-informed about European affairs as were those of Versailles by theirs. Yet the former knew much less, for there was then much less that could be known. There

<sup>1</sup> A picture of the Foreign Office in the nineteenth century is given in *Recollections of the Old Foreign Office* (John Murray: 1901) by Sir Edward Hertslet, for many years Librarian and Keeper of the Archives. He served in the Foreign Office from 1840 until 1896.

were no reliable census returns, no detailed studies of ethnographical distribution and the flow of commercial exchanges in the regions under discussion. Wilson and Lloyd George may have found it difficult right up to the end to distinguish between Slovakia and Slovenia; but their professional staffs, who did not, had to assimilate a vast array of facts and statistics before each frontier-line was drawn.

Not only was there less knowledge available before the middle years of the nineteenth century about the peoples and territories which formed (and still form) the material of foreign policy and diplomatic negotiation: there was also a far smaller sum-total of facts to be assimilated about the actual players in the game, for they were so few. In the autocratic countries—Russia, Austria, Prussia and Turkey—the rulers themselves handled foreign affairs with the assistance of their foreign ministers. Public opinion of a sort there was, but it could not and did not mould policy. Diplomacy in such circumstances was a game played out between a mere handful of personalities. The professional diplomatist, in order to play the game competently, had to know very well indeed the characteristics and idiosyncrasies of the other contestants; and if he was conscientious he did not, even in an autocratically-governed country, entirely exclude from the range of his studies the national background of minor political figures and groups. But in Prussia, for example, he could safely ignore in his day-to-day calculations the views of millions of ordinary professional Germans, for he knew that, so long as the autocratic machinery continued to function at all, the ordinary Germans would function as mere cogs in it.

This brings us to what is probably the greatest of all the factors which we have to consider in comparing pre-1914 diplomacy with that of the present day: the widening and strengthening of popular control over governmental policy.

It is a moot point how far, in this respect, the situation in our own country before 1914 resembled that obtaining in the autocratic countries. There was certainly some resemblance, in that even with us the handling of foreign affairs was still very generally regarded in principle as the special preserve of the Sovereign and the innermost circle of the Cabinet. Queen Victoria, as is well known, intervened, or tried to intervene, extensively; and her prime ministers and foreign ministers undoubtedly took many decisions on their own which would nowadays call for exhaustive Cabinet discussions and parliamentary debate. Public opinion in Great Britain did however count for a good deal, particularly in matters that were held to affect the national prestige. Not only parliamentary debates on

foreign affairs, but also such factors as *The Times* leading articles on foreign policy, had to be taken fully into account by nineteenth century foreign secretaries. British financial and commercial interests, too, were both vocal and influential in all questions of external affairs which directly affected them, and such questions were many in an age of Imperial expansion.

Nevertheless the influence of public opinion was very much smaller then than it is today. Those who were swayed by the opinions of *The Times* in the nineteenth century constituted an influential group of people, but it was a very small group in relation to the size of the electorate. There was, as we have already seen, a very large measure of agreement about the fundamental principle of our foreign policy; and since the political parties were not in conflict over this, though they frequently disagreed about the methods to be used in particular cases, the man in the street was less often urged to make his weight as a voter felt in the sphere of external relations. These relations did not in fact provide, to the same extent as they do today, the material for internal controversy on party lines.

The last of the major factors that call for consideration in comparing pre-1914 diplomatic conditions with those of our own day—the last, that is, if we treat the growth of publicity, about which there will be something to say presently, as bound up with the growth of popular control over policy—is the large-scale invasion of the diplomatic field by economic problems. It is quite true, of course, that these problems always operated powerfully (however much or little they were recognised as doing so) in the relationships between states. The main causes of countless nomadic wanderings, leading sometimes to the establishment of vast empires, were certainly economic; and probably there never was a time in all history when the trade rivalries between civilised states did not influence the diplomatic and other official contacts between them, for all that the dynastic and personal affairs of princes used to figure more prominently. In the middle ages British foreign policies were largely influenced by such economic factors as the wool trade; and economic rivalries underlay the Dutch wars of the seventeenth century and the French wars of the eighteenth.

But, with certain large exceptions, the ability of governments to intervene systematically and competently in the economic field may nevertheless be regarded as a fairly recent development. Many rulers in early times tried indeed to do so, and with partial or temporary success. Some of the later Ptolemies, for example, practised state trading in the form of government wheat monopolies; the Emperor Frederick II tried to bring under official control the whole of the

commerce between his Neapolitan and Sicilian domains and the outside world; and so on. But these and other early experiments were doomed to eventual failure by the fact that the apparatus of government was too primitive and personal to yield lasting results. An elaborate bureaucratic mechanism organised on modern lines and enjoying modern facilities in such things as communications was needed before there could be state intervention or controls of the systematic and far-reaching kind which are common today.

During the period between 1815 and 1914 the policy of free trade and economic *laissez faire* held the field in this country. It suited us very well, for we had initiated the industrial revolution and had a long start over the other countries which were eventually to become our competitors. We had plenty of foreign customers eager to pay for our manufactured products with the food we needed to support a rapidly-growing population. Most British traders during the nineteenth century were not at all anxious for governmental direction in the conduct of their business. They wanted and needed the protection of the flag—both for the maintenance of the trade they already had and for its further expansion; and they also needed such forms of governmental help as the conclusion of commercial treaties designed to facilitate their own activities. But any suggestion that the British government of the day should take over these activities, even in part, would have aroused the strongest opposition and was not in fact put forward in any quarter.

It is not part of our purpose to assess the merits of state trading or economic controls either on grounds of abstract principle or more specifically in the political circumstances of the world as it exists now. The relevant facts, from the point of view of our comparison between pre-1914 and present diplomacy, are that from the first world war onwards a number of autocratically governed countries adopted methods of state intervention and controls on a wide scale; that they won great advantages by doing so; and that we in our turn were obliged to imitate them to some extent in order to safeguard our own interests. The new phase called for a large increase in the governmental apparatus.

Over the longer period between 1815 and the present day there was not, however, a self-regulating balance in this country between the demand for diplomatic competence in economic affairs and the supply of it. The main demand for economic competence in the diplomatic profession—and for cadres expanded to include economic specialists amongst others—did, as has been stated, come after 1914; and when it came it was met. But throughout most of the nineteenth century a number of quite important economic and

financial questions had created a demand on a lesser scale which was not met because it was not heard or understood by those in control of foreign policy. Even in those remoter times direct state trading on well-organised bureaucratic lines had indeed made its appearances in most countries: the tobacco *régies* in France and Italy, and the Prussian State Railways, are examples of it. But the exercise of direct or indirect control by the State over large areas of commerce previously left to private enterprise had not become a major factor in international affairs. Much more important then were the deliberate use made by many governments of the means at their disposal to direct and control foreign investment, and the attempts of groups of investors to manipulate foreign policy in their own interest.

It is true that owing to our great wealth, and to the intrinsic strength of our banking and financial systems, as well as to our political structure, our financial and industrial enterprises abroad had far less need of State support than those, for example, of France and Germany, while our governments were too powerful to fall under the control of self-interested private combinations. But it is also true that such connexions as existed—and in our own country there were perhaps more than is commonly supposed—between high finance and foreign policy were often not properly understood or taken into full account by the nineteenth century Foreign Office. The trends of capital investment, and the effects of these trends on policy in the states concerned, were at times beyond its ken. Even much more easily discernible developments in international economic affairs, such as the purchase of the Suez Canal shares by Disraeli, the construction of the Baghdad Railway, and the obtaining of the first oil concession in Persia, were things of which the Foreign Office officials of the day seem to have been only very imperfectly aware. These developments could not, indeed, have been properly studied and assessed without a much bigger staff than there then was. But it was not even realised that they needed to be studied and assessed.

It is fair to add here that—as will be explained more fully in a later chapter—the nineteenth century Foreign Office, as a Department of State, was not recognised as having any advisory function. British foreign secretaries sought the advice of their officials very much less than they came to do in later times; hence it is arguable that it would have made little difference to British foreign policy even if these officials had been much better informed and competent in economic questions than in fact they were. For our present purposes of comparison, however, this is largely immaterial. The fact remains that the British diplomatic apparatus as a

whole, including the foreign secretaries and their official servants both at home and abroad, was both too small and too little competent in economic questions for the needs of the period before direct state intervention and controls had become the major factor.

The present picture is markedly different. The contemporary Foreign Office and the Foreign Service more generally cannot be fairly accused of not taking economic problems seriously enough. It is of course the Board of Trade, and not the Foreign Office, that is primarily responsible for the promotion of British overseas trade; and similarly it is the Treasury, and not the Foreign Office, that is primarily responsible for British financial policy in relation to the outside world. But obviously the Foreign Office is deeply interested in these things, if only because they are nowadays recognised by everyone as being inextricably woven into the pattern of international political relations. It is not just a matter of behind-the-scenes interest: the Foreign Service commercial-diplomatic and consular officers abroad form as it were the front line of the Board of Trade in foreign lands, for the purposes both of economic study on the spot and of active negotiation. It is probably no exaggeration to say that at present fully one-third of the work of the Foreign Service as a whole is preponderantly economic—or commercial, or financial—in character. A diversification of spheres of interest invariably creates the need for special organisations devoted mainly to co-ordination and liaison. Double the variety of your objectives, and you must more than double your staff if confusion and cross-purposes are to be avoided. There is always a close interaction between political and economic problems, and the Foreign Service specialists in each type of problem must be kept in line with one another. Liaison within the Service itself is not by any means the only sort required: there must be permanent contact between the Service and a great variety of external economic bodies, governmental and other.

The broad comparisons so far drawn have been chiefly between the field of diplomatic activity as it existed before 1914 and as it exists today. It is time now to consider briefly the phases of development within this period of four decades. Certainly it needed both the world wars to bring British Foreign Service functions to their present pitch of complexity, but even the first world war alone did much in this direction. It dragged down the old order finally, but introduced nothing at all stable in its place. It did, it is true, leave our country still relatively strong; and though it resulted in the establishment of militant communism in one vast area, the menace of this new force took long to make itself fully felt.

Nevertheless by 1919 most of the seeds destined to grow up into our present political forest had taken firm root, and British diplomacy had had to expand its apparatus greatly in consequence. Nationalism, indeed, under the slogan of 'self-determination', had already come to full growth. At Versailles the old map of Europe and the Near and Middle East was transformed into a patchwork quilt of new national entities—sovereign states and mandated territories—many of them so small and inherently weak as to be of obviously questionable viability. No less than twelve emerged at the outset, and two more were added a little later. To each of the new independent states British diplomatic missions had to be accredited, and this in itself called for a large increase in Service staff. Far more serious, however, was the fact that each new state and mandated territory engendered, by its very emergence, a whole series of new political problems—problems of rivalry between the newcomers; of irredentism among the old and partially dismembered countries; of friction with, and between, the mandatory powers; and so on and so forth.

Still more important, in its effects on the British diplomatic apparatus and on diplomatic life more generally, was the universalisation of many aspects of international affairs by the establishment of the League of Nations. As we have seen already in Chapter I, the idea behind this development was, essentially, to take the dangerous edge off nationalism by creating something greater—an internationalism which should transcend the whole tangled mass of bilateral inter-state relations and thus ensure that these relations should never again degenerate into armed conflict. Peace having been shown—or so at least it was claimed—to be indivisible, it was argued that every nation was interested in the preservation of peace everywhere; hence entitled, even morally obliged, to work for its preservation by taking part in the debating and voting procedures of a world-wide forum. We have also seen in Chapter I, however, that while the full realisation of this idea may one day lighten the task of the professional diplomatist, for the present it has made it still heavier. Universalisation—which is basically an application of ordinary democratic principles to the field of international relations—means that every state has a say (and a vote) in everything discussed by the forum to which it belongs as a participating member; and this immeasurably complicates the practical conduct of affairs. The transition from an era of mainly bilateral inter-state business to that of widespread multilateral contacts and negotiation was certainly in accordance with the desire of all thinking men for a coherent world order. It was also made more or less inevitable by the shrinkage of the world as a result of improving communications



and the ever-increasing interdependence of nations. But it presents the great practical disadvantage of enormously augmenting the sum-total of negotiation (as well as largely changing its form), since it means that a state can no longer stand entirely aloof from affairs which do not, in any direct sense, concern it at all.

Similar in some ways to this trend towards universalisation in the international field has been the trend towards centralisation in the conduct of diplomatic relations by individual national states. The latter trend too may be inspired to some extent by democratic motives—the desire, in fact, to bring external negotiation under the closest possible control by the foreign minister and hence ultimately by the national assembly—but it is much more directly and inevitably the product of scientific progress in the sphere of communications. Aside from any question of democratic control, every nation's diplomatic activities must be co-ordinated so far as it is physically possible to do so if they are to have the maximum effect; and nowadays much more is possible in this direction than at any previous time. The career diplomatists stationed abroad can be more closely controlled by their own foreign ministries than they ever were in the past; and the foreign ministers themselves can intervene personally to a much greater extent than hitherto owing to the ease and rapidity of air travel.

At first sight it may seem that both these modern developments ought to simplify rather than complicate the business of diplomacy: centralisation of control must obviously promote consistency and uniformity in the execution of policy; and the round-table methods of 'conference diplomacy' ought surely to keep down the tangle of cross-purposes and paper work which distance and dispersion notoriously create. Neither of these deductions is wholly false, but both need extensive qualification. There will be a good deal more to say about them in later chapters, but a brief word must be said of them here.

The tightening of control over diplomatic outposts does make for greater consistency in the execution of policy, and this is unquestionably an all-round gain. But it also increases enormously, in terms of mere bulk, the communications between outposts and their directing centres. In the devising of policy at the centre one can never know enough about the facts on which it must be based; and the more facilities there are for obtaining information from the outposts, the more untiringly it must be sought. Moreover, as we have seen in Chapter I, the diplomatic representatives at the outposts are not there merely to supply facts—that is but one of their duties. Their advice also is constantly needed and asked for. Hence an ever-

increasing volume of telegraphic and other communications.<sup>1</sup> 'Conference diplomacy', again, though a necessary and valuable method of procedure in modern conditions, is not quite so much of a simplifying factor as it appears at first sight. It is true that there would be no hope of unravelling some of the knots in present-day international relations without recourse to it, so many different threads being caught together in each of these knots; and in that sense it can with truth be called a simplifying factor. But it does not, as many people assume, short-circuit the ordinary processes of bilateral diplomacy. Every round-table conference requires elaborate preparation in all the capitals concerned if it is to have a fair chance of success. Hence 'conference diplomacy' too is a multiplier of diplomatic work in terms of mere volume, for all that it is a potential solvent of the otherwise insoluble.

The universalising effect of the United Nations is fully as great in the economic field as it is in the political—in contrast with the effect of the League of Nations, which had but one council for both types of work and only dealt with economic questions as a sideline. And what has been said above about the practical complications introduced by universalisation in general is equally applicable to the specifically economic field. A large section of the present Foreign Service staff is engaged exclusively on economic affairs with particular reference to the handling of them by international bodies.

Another very important development of diplomacy which had hardly begun to make itself felt before the first world war is international publicity. This too called for the creation of a new body of diplomatic specialists. As we shall see more fully in a later chapter, these specialists did not always in the past belong to the Foreign Service; but they are now an inseparable element of it.

Like many another development of recent years, international publicity is a combined product of the political conditions created by the first world war and of technological progress. The broadening of popular control over policy went hand-in-hand with scientific advances in the means of enlightening—but also of misleading—the popular controllers. Modern international publicity also owes much of its importance to the spread of education generally.

The ordinary people of the world after 1914 could never be as

<sup>1</sup> Long-distance telephony plays a less important part in diplomacy than is commonly supposed, owing to the need for secrecy. The use of cyphers cannot normally be forgone. We are a long way yet from reaching the ideal of instantaneous communications; and until we do so the crossing of messages will remain a potential cause of confusion. Nowadays, to be sure, messages take a matter of hours to reach their destination, whereas in former times they took a matter of weeks. But nowadays too the frequency with which messages are sent is such as to produce a good deal of crossing.

indifferent as they had previously been to the evolution of foreign affairs. They had suffered too much for that; and they had also acquired, by reason largely of their sufferings, a much greater diversity of political creeds than ever before. Some of these creeds were revolutionary and extremist. All of them tended in some degree to project internal political principles and doctrines into the external sphere of international relationships. For every government, therefore, there arose a pressing problem of popular guidance—particularly in the countries most democratically ruled. And the increasing need was matched by increasingly effective scientific methods of satisfying it. The evolution of broadcasting, among other technological innovations, provided a tool that no government could afford to neglect. At first the main object pursued by most governments was the enlightenment of their own peoples in matters (amongst others) of foreign affairs. But very soon the temptation became irresistible to appeal to wider audiences abroad—the ether being, even in our nationalistic age, without effective man-made frontiers.

As stated in Chapter I, there are several kinds of foreign publicity; and broadcasting in foreign languages is only one of them. The Foreign Service is naturally concerned in some degree with all of them, and hence extends its activities in some ways beyond the bounds of what can be strictly called diplomacy (which is an inter-governmental link). It cannot avoid doing so, seeing that such publicity, if not strictly diplomatic, is at least a form—and in present circumstances a very necessary form—of contact with the outside world. And it needs a large and technically competent staff of specialists to cope with the work on a full-time basis. Specialists, however, are not the only element engaged: to almost every member of the Foreign Service who goes abroad, and to many of those who stay at home, there falls from time to time the duty of performing publicity work of one kind or another. This means a great enlargement of the contemporary diplomatist's horizon and scope of action as compared with the period before 1914 (when it used to be said with some truth that a diplomatist might consider himself successful to the extent to which he remained unknown to the general public).

The question of publicity brings us back by a natural transition to the impact of democracy—both internal or national, and external or universalised—on diplomacy; for in a democratic country publicity is by no means solely of the government's making, even within the purely national field, and the government (as also its diplomatic servants less directly) is always swayed to some extent by what it seeks to sway. Foreign policy in the democracies

is, in fact, very largely the product of interacting official and non-official publicity—of governmental guidance and explanation on the one hand, and of popular (and parliamentary) expressions of opinion and demands on the other. It would be quite wrong, indeed, to suggest that this interaction between forces is just a tug-of-war. Popular opinion, as expressed through parliaments and other public media, is ultimately the master in all democratic countries, and therefore ultimately dictates what foreign policy should be. But the master is usually without adequate knowledge. He is seldom even consistent in the prejudices which spring from his lack of knowledge. Hence democratic governments can never, in these matters, be purely passive, however faithful they may be to the general principle that they are merely a crystallisation of the people's will.

Most champions of the democratic faith would contend that this constant interaction between a people and its government in the making of foreign policy is the symptom of a thoroughly healthy state. And in general it no doubt is so. But it is also, and incidentally, one of the practical complications of diplomatic work; and here we are attempting to consider dispassionately what those complications are which have necessitated Service expansion. Indeed it is one of the largest of them. The democratic omelette is very well worth making, but a good many of the eggs that must be broken to make it are diplomatic eggs. The broadening of democratic control has unquestionably made foreign policy at once more difficult to formulate and more unhandy to conduct.

It has been indicated above that during the nineteenth century, when there was general agreement in this country about the necessity for attempting to preserve the balance of power, British diplomacy usually enjoyed the advantage of being able to operate quietly and steadily. A large measure of steadiness and quietness (by which is meant the avoidance of emotional publicity during actual negotiations) is essential for any really successful diplomacy. Another essential, certainly, is that it should have sufficient national backing. During the nineteenth century British diplomacy did usually have sufficient backing, though this was mainly of the implicit rather than the explicit kind. The government of the day usually knew, that is, and all other governments knew too, that it could count on adequate popular support for its policies whenever the need might arise. (Occasionally, indeed, British governments were brought down over questions of foreign affairs, but such occasions were altogether exceptional.) This is still partly true today, but less so than it once was. In our present age, when internal party politics cover the whole range of external affairs, popular support for external policy clearly cannot be taken so much for granted.

Few people would wish to dispute that in general the broadening of democratic control is at once a necessary and a welcome thing. Nevertheless so far as foreign policy and its diplomatic execution are concerned it certainly makes for weakness unless the public is really well-informed, logically and unemotionally consistent, and willing to allow its official servants to do their work with as little interruption as possible. And it is not easy to see how these conditions can ever be fully realised in practice.

Most problems of foreign affairs are so difficult and full of ramifications that even the expert who spends his life in dealing with them is seldom as knowledgeable as he should be; and one of the main difficulties is undoubtedly the wide divergence of mentality between nations. This divergence cannot be apprehended solely by the light of nature: it must be studied long and laboriously. It is, however, very apt to be brushed aside, as something unreal or too tiresome to be worth bothering about, by untravelled people familiar only with their own country and convinced that its ways and habits of thought are uniquely commendable. Adequate knowledge, the first condition of efficient popular control over policy, is thus very difficult to come by. But without it, clearly, the second major condition—consistency—is not even to be hoped for: one cannot honestly take the same line about a problem from day to day if one's ideas about its background and underlying causes are in a state of constant flux.

Nor are adequate knowledge and a resultant consistency the only elements needed. Once foreign affairs are brought into the arena of party politics, two things are likely to happen: genuine divergences of outlook, corresponding more or less to the internal political pattern, will be liable to manifest themselves as loudly-expressed differences of opinion concerning the best foreign policy to pursue; and, in addition, the parties not in power will be under strong temptation to oppose merely for opposition's sake, using the complex of external affairs as a sort of stalking-horse for their internal manoeuvres. Consequently the third requisite of successful foreign policy is that the party politician in opposition should exercise considerable self-denial in the interest of a common national front; abstaining not only from purely factious criticism, but also—and quite often—from the public expression of views which he genuinely regards as important. He may, and sometimes does, consider it better to weaken his country's diplomatic effectiveness than to countenance by silence a policy he regards as wrong. And in this he may be morally justified. But we are not concerned here with moral issues: we are concerned simply to analyse present-day diplomatic difficulties and complexities.

To all this it may well be objected that democratic control, besides being desirable in principle, has been shown to function satisfactorily enough in practice; that those whose business it is to cope with foreign affairs have only to justify their work publicly in order to receive support (provided, of course, that the justification is good); and that there exists, when all is said and done, a remarkable degree of consistency and continuity in British foreign policy regardless of shifts in the internal political scene. These things are broadly true so far as the recent history of our own country is concerned; but it should be remembered that extremist political tendencies have so far made hardly any headway in our own party system. The potential weaknesses and practical complications remain. Inescapably, a foreign policy is the less effectual the more it is publicly attacked at home; and this is so even when it eventually receives the support of a majority vote.

We live in an age of vociferous international propaganda, and each government concerned in an inter-state relationship which includes an element of disharmony is apt to suppose that by making its propaganda still more vociferous it can turn the parliamentary majority of the other state into a minority. Sometimes, indeed, it can. When, conversely, the attitude of the majority is acceptable to it, and there is thus no element of disharmony for the moment, confidence in the ability of the other state to persist in its acceptable courses is sapped by awareness of the minority's dislike of these courses. In neither case can the state that has given evidence of internal dissension speak with that completely firm voice which is so necessary in external affairs. Possibly it may be well for the world, on general principles, that the internal weaknesses of individual states should be publicly known. It certainly would be if all states were equally democratic; for the result would be to eliminate everywhere the dangerous temptation to indulge in bluff for the achievement of national aims. But it is none the less true that, as things now are, those states which through being democratic are unable to conceal their internal dissensions are at a great disadvantage in any diplomatic negotiation. And we are one of them.

The main method of attempting to counteract the effects of this weakness inherent in the democratic system is, of course, governmental publicity—internal and external, defensive and prophylactic or educational. And here, as we have seen, the Foreign Service naturally plays a major rôle. It has its specialised departments at home, and its specialised staffs overseas, for whole-time publicity work. For that matter almost every department of the Foreign Office, and almost every serving officer abroad, is involved to some extent; for there is scarcely any aspect of foreign relations that does

not on occasion come into the limelight, and the publicity specialists must obtain their facts and arguments from innumerable Service sources—they are, to a large extent, collectors, assemblers and propagators of information and ideas which do not originate with themselves. Again, quite a lot of the time of the average Foreign Office department not specialised in publicity work is taken up by the task of supplying, usually at short notice, replies to parliamentary questions both written and oral; and often this involves complicated telegraphic exchanges with the missions abroad, who in their turn must obtain some of the facts from external sources. In short, the whole Foreign Service has much to do, in addition to its basic task of maintaining intergovernmental diplomatic contacts, in the way of explaining and justifying its performance of that task to a world-wide public.

The Foreign Service, like the Civil Service as a whole, has thus had to increase its staff to cope with the growing complexities of national and international life. Staffs grow, not because growth is an order of nature, but because the performance of successive new functions is required of them and successive new tasks are placed upon them. As was well said by the author of a series of articles on the British Civil Service published in *The Times* in November, 1953: 'All significant changes in the sizes of staffs of Government departments follow changes in Government policy—and, therefore, changes in function. Significant measures and reductions in staff are the consequence of policy.' He quoted a former Director of Organisation and Methods at the Treasury as saying in 1948: 'Successive Parliaments pile further Pelions on the ever-growing Ossa'; and as adding that 'Parliament never, and Government scarcely ever, seem to consider means when considering policy.' The Foreign Service have borne their share, and perhaps more than their share, of this increasing burden. If the burden is to be lightened and staffs significantly reduced, Parliaments and Governments will need to abate their requirements.





## PART TWO

### *Supplementary Facts and Figures*



## CHAPTER III

### *Organisation, Size and Cost*

HAVING glanced briefly in Chapter I at the various kinds of function which the Foreign Service performs, and considered in Chapter II why its work should of late have become so much heavier than it used to be, it is time to look into the main facts about its present structure, size and cost. Statistical material, unless elaborated, is apt to repel the general reader. Nevertheless a few definitions and figures are needed at this stage, if only to make fully intelligible the descriptive chapters which will follow and to show how comparatively small and inexpensive the Service still is in relation to government employment and expenditure generally.

The personnel of the Service consists of four branches of established government servants, each branch having its own kind of function to perform. These are:

*Branch A*, corresponding roughly to the Administrative Class of the Home Civil Service;

*Branch B*, corresponding roughly to the Executive and Clerical Classes of the Home Civil Service;

*Branch C*, consisting of shorthand-typists and typists; and

*Branch D*, consisting of overseas established personnel of what are known in Whitehall jargon as 'the messengerial grades'—chancery messengers, office keepers, night guards and the like.

In each of these four branches of the Service there are grades which determine hierarchical seniority within the branch. In Branch A there are nine grades; in Branch B eight (1 to 6, but with a 1A and a 5A); in Branch C two; in Branch D three.

All members of Branches A, B and C are liable for service both at home and abroad, and may be employed on any type of Foreign Service work—the four main types being diplomatic, consular, commercial and 'Information'. Branch D, on the other hand, serves exclusively abroad, the so-called messengerial grades of the Foreign Office being Home Civil Servants. But Branch D personnel are not static: they can be transferred from post to post *abroad* as required. The bulk of the Foreign Service staff is recruited through normal Civil Service channels.

Before considering further the relationship between the four Service branches, it will be convenient to enumerate the various categories of people who work with the Service without being in it.

Attached to posts abroad (mainly to the diplomatic missions and the delegations to international bodies, seldom to consular establishments) are various specialists and advisers temporarily seconded from the Fighting Services and from other Government Departments. At a normal diplomatic post there will be naval, military and air attachés (though sometimes these cover a number of the smaller posts by occasional visits from a main operating centre in one of them); and there may also be experts on loan from the Treasury, the Ministry of Labour and National Service, and so on. The Labour Attachés, who are at present seventeen in number and cover between them twenty-nine countries, constitute a particularly important corps of advisers at the present time when labour and trade union questions loom so large on the political horizon.

At a good many posts abroad, too, a proportion of the subordinate employees are, for reasons of convenience and economy, locally engaged, unestablished, and normally unpensionable. Such people do not belong to the Service, but work for it as auxiliaries within the limits set by considerations of expediency and security.

At home also there are people at many different hierarchical levels who work for the Service but do not belong to it. We have already seen that the so-called messengerial grades employed in the Foreign Office are Home Civil Servants, not members of the Foreign Service. Another class of Home Civil Servants employed in the Foreign Office consists of the Clerical Assistants, who rank immediately below the junior grade of Branch B. There are numerous other non-Service helpers, e.g., paper-keepers, security officers, etc. The Passport Office, again, which constitutes a department of the Foreign Office, is staffed entirely by members of the Home Civil Service. Another part of the Foreign Office which is not staffed by the Foreign Service is the so-called German Section, which came into being in 1947 when the Foreign Secretary took over the responsibility for the Control Office for Germany and Austria. These two countries were then under Allied control for almost all their affairs, both internal and external, and the German Section contained departments which covered a much wider field than that covered by the normal Foreign Office department dealing with a group of foreign countries. In 1950 the affairs of Austria were removed from the purview of the German Section, and shortly afterwards the political and economic aspects of German affairs were also removed. The residue of the German Section, staffed by Home Civil Servants, now consists only of an Establishment Department and an Accounts Department, responsible for the administration of the British element of the Control Commission in Germany.

Yet another category of people not belonging to the Foreign

Service but attached to the Foreign Office and serving at home is made up of various high-ranking experts, such as the Adviser on International Labour Questions and the Rice Adviser, who are on secondment from other Government Departments.

Finally there are the Queen's Foreign Service Messengers, to the number of about forty. Though they work wholly for the Foreign Service, carrying its diplomatic bags in all parts of the world, they are not of it. They constitute a corps which is separately and specially recruited on temporary terms, and they have their own regulations and conditions of service.

The Legal Adviser and his assistants work within the Foreign Office on a long-term basis—most of them do so, indeed, for the greater part of their professional lives, and some of them are established members of the Foreign Service. But their position in relation to the amalgamated Service as a whole is exceptional in that, as trained lawyers, they have their own highly-specialised line of country and are not normally transferred from it to the main types of Service work.

These categories of non-Service and special Service personnel have been mentioned for the sake of completeness and because, whether employed on a short-term or a long-term basis, they have an important contribution to make to the present work of the organisation as a whole. But we are concerned chiefly in this chapter with the basic organisation of the Service itself. It may be well to explain at this point that, notwithstanding the wide bureaucratic use of such expressions as 'the messengerial grades', the grades which classify every member of the Service in all its four branches should not be regarded as stretching in a vertical line from Grade 1 of Branch A straight down to Grade 3 of Branch D. Each branch may indeed be looked upon as a separate ladder, but the four ladders are not joined end to end. A 'hierarchical' order there is, of course, for without it there would be no pattern of authority or chain of command within the organisation as a whole. And in this order Branch A is the senior as a branch, because it copes mainly with the primary Service task of conducting relations with the outside world, whereas the other branches exist mainly to help it in this task by providing the necessary administrative and other ancillary services. But some of the ways of helping are intrinsically of more importance than some of the ways of coping directly with the primary task. And this is one reason why, for example, Branches A and B are not, hierarchically speaking, in series. They are not, over the whole of their length, in parallel either; but there is a considerable overlapping between sections of them.

Grades 2 and 3 of Branch B, for instance, are both regarded as

being roughly equivalent in status to Grade 7 of Branch A. But a Branch B officer in either of these grades may do work involving greater responsibility than a Branch A officer of comparable grade. If he is serving at home he may, for example, handle important matters of Service Finance (in which case, incidentally, he will have direct dealings with an 'outside world' of other Government Departments, though not usually with that of foreign governments and authorities); or he may be a key man in the system of Service communications. This is natural enough, seeing that in Branch B Grades 2 and 3 are of higher rank than is Grade 7 in Branch A, and a Branch B officer in these grades is usually older and more experienced than his counterpart in Branch A. His status in the Service depends on the work he does, and is not affected by the fact that he is not a member of the senior Branch.

But the relationship between Branches A and B is even closer than this overlapping suggests. Not only do the two branches lie partly in parallel so far as the hierarchical order is concerned: they are actually intermingled to a considerable extent as regards the nature of their work. Although, as has been said, Branch A exists *mainly* to cope with the conduct of relations with the outside world, and Branch B *mainly* to manage the ancillary services, there are important exceptions to this generalisation. Senior officers of Branch A are in charge of some of the principal sections of the Office which deal with matters of internal administration; and conversely there are quite a number of Branch B officers doing work of what is broadly called 'Branch A type' in non-administrative departments of the Office. Overseas, too, a large number of Branch B officers deal direct with the outside world as consular officers - often indeed as the heads of consular posts other than consulates-general. And Branch B also provides the staff for a good many of the more junior posts in the commercial and Information sections of such missions. There is, in short, a wide sharing of jobs between Branches A and B both at home and abroad as well as an overlapping of hierarchical levels; and the fact that a man belongs to the junior of the two branches does not in itself tell one anything definite either about his standing in the hierarchy or about the sort of work he performs.

For most purposes of internal administration, including the fixing of salaries, the determining factor is the classification by branch, and by grade within the branch. But there is another and older system of classification, dating from agreements reached at the Congress of Vienna, for the whole of Branch A and some members of Branch B, which is still used more generally and is what counts in relations with the outside world. This is the system of rank as

determined by an officer's Royal Commission. In three out of the four main types of work the ranks are those of the old (pre-1943) Diplomatic Service, and are as follows: Ambassador; Minister;<sup>1</sup> Minister (Personal Rank) serving under an Ambassador; Counsellor; First Secretary; Second Secretary; Third Secretary; Junior Attaché. Those engaged on consular work, on the other hand, have their own separate system of classification in accordance with their Royal Commissions: they may be Consuls-General, or Consuls, or Vice-Consuls. There is an established order of precedence as between officers classified according to these two distinct systems. And the fact that there are two systems does not mean that there are two separate cadres; for, as we shall see presently in greater detail, no officer serves nowadays for the whole of his career in a consular capacity. The holding of Royal Commissions is not confined exclusively to Branch A: there are, as we have already seen, many Branch B consular officers, and these, of course, hold Royal Commissions as such.

Although these 'ranks according to Commission' provide for the most part an adequate rough-and-ready guide to an officer's hierarchical standing, a word of explanation is needed here about the distinction between Ambassadors and Ministers Plenipotentiary. It has in fact almost ceased to be a valid distinction, owing to the present inflation of the ambassadorial title. The system of diplomatic ranks, as regularised by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 with the object of putting an end to unseemly struggles for precedence, still holds good in theory and for some practical purposes. Under that system any ambassador takes precedence over any minister plenipotentiary; and the former alone, being regarded as representing the person of his Sovereign (the Congress, of course, did not cater for republican régimes), has the prescriptive right to seek audience of the Head of the State in which he serves. Moreover in view of his precedence over ministers he alone has the chance of becoming the dean ('doyen') of the local diplomatic corps; and this position (which depends, amongst the ambassadors, solely on length of service at the post) naturally confers a certain local prestige—though not, as a rule, any other advantage from the point of view of official work. But today there are more ambassadors in the world than there are ministers plenipotentiary—in the British Service the proportion is not far short of two to one. And there are some mini-

<sup>1</sup> The full title is 'Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary', but this impossible mouthful is usually shortened to 'Minister' despite the fact that the title has various other uses. Newspapers often use the word 'Envoy' indiscriminately in headlines, both for Ambassadors and for Ministers, merely because it is short. It has, however, no official currency except as part of a Minister's full title.

sters who are doing more important jobs, and therefore belong to higher Service grades, than some ambassadors. This is not the place to describe in detail the causes of the 'ambassadorial inflation'. It is sufficient to say that the process was started, with an eye to short-term political advantages, by powers other than ourselves; that it was only with reluctance that we followed suit in order to keep abreast in the matter of representational standing; and that, once started, the process inevitably proved impossible to arrest. The present distribution of the two titles is patchy and anomalous, and the day will certainly come before long when the old distinction between them will have to be officially dropped. All heads of diplomatic missions will then be known by the same title, be it that of ambassador or some appellation freshly coined. But that lies in the future.

In the 1953/4 estimates, the totals of personnel serving under the Foreign Office at home and abroad, excluding the German Section, are shown respectively as 4,480 and 5,948. But these totals include locally-engaged non-Service employees and also Branch D (the 'messengerial grades'); for Branches A, B and C, i.e., for people who are members of the Foreign Service and are not of the messengerial grades, the aggregate is only about 2,600.

The following table, which is also derived from the Foreign Service estimates for 1953-54, shows the approximate distribution of officers serving abroad in representative capacities, with their commissioned ranks and service grades (the branch is Branch A where not otherwise stated):

<i>Diplomatic</i>					
Ambassadors	49	...	...	...	Grades 1 to 6
Ministers (Plenipotentiary)	22	...	...	...	Grades 3 to 6
Ministers (serving under ambassadors)	10	...	...	...	Grades 3 and 5
Counsellors	44	...	...	...	Grades 5 and 6
First Secretaries	84	...	...	...	Grade 7
Second and Third Secretaries	77	...	...	...	Grades 8 and 9
Total	...	286			

<i>Commercial Diplomatic</i>					
Ministers	4	...	...	...	Grade 4
Ministers	5	...	...	...	Grade 5
Counsellors	19	...	...	...	Grade 6
First Secretaries	33	...	...	...	Grade 7
Second and Third Secretaries	15	...	...	...	Grades 8 and 9
First Secretaries	12	...	...	...	Grade 3, Branch B
Second Secretaries	31	...	...	...	Grade 4, Branch B
Total	...	119			



*Consuls*

Consuls-General 3	...	...	...	...	Grade 4
Consuls-General 13	...	...	...	...	Grade 5
Consuls-General 51	...	...	...	...	Grade 6
Consuls 42	...	...	...	...	Grade 7
Consuls 26	...	...	...	...	Grade 2, Branch B
Consuls 60	...	...	...	...	Grade 3, Branch B
Vice-Consuls 111	...	...	...	...	Grade 4, Branch B
Total ... 306					

*Information*

Minister 1	...	...	...	...	Grade 5
Counsellors 4	...	...	...	...	Grade 6
First Secretaries 23	...	...	...	...	Grade 7
Second Secretaries 1	...	...	...	...	Grade 8
First Secretaries 16	...	...	...	...	Grades 2 and 3, Branch B
Second Secretaries 40	...	...	...	...	Grade 4, Branch B
Third Secretaries 17	...	...	...	...	Grade 5, Branch B
Total ... 102					

A similar table cannot usefully be given for the staff employed at the Foreign Office, since 'representational' function is naturally a much less serviceable criterion of importance at home. Broadly speaking, however, it may be said that in the Foreign Office there is a far higher proportion of Branch B officers,\* some of whom occupy very important positions. They are, as we have seen, particularly strong in that large section of the Office which is concerned with the internal administration of the Service.

So much for the different kinds of personnel who comprise the Foreign Service or work with it. Let us now consider the types of organisation in which such personnel may be employed, beginning with the Department at home.

The Foreign Office is, of course, one of the Departments of State; but, somewhat confusingly, the basic structural units into which it is sub-divided are also called 'departments'. These correspond approximately to what in other Departments of State are known as 'divisions'. At present there are thirty-eight Foreign Office departments in all. A list of these departments and descriptions of their functions will be found in Appendices I and II.<sup>1</sup> The two forming the German Section exist to meet a temporary need only. All but two of the remaining thirty-six, which may be regarded as more permanent components of the Office structure, can be classed

<sup>1</sup> It will be seen that the number of departments listed in Appendices I and II is 40. This is because the Corps of Inspectors and the Legal Advisers, who do not strictly speaking constitute departments, have been included there for the sake of completeness.

under three main heads: political, functional, and administrative.

There are, at present nine *political* departments, each dealing with the affairs of a distinct geographical area:

African; American (sub-divided into two sections, for the United States and Latin America respectively); Far Eastern; Levant (Iraq, Israel, Jordan, the Lebanon, Syria); Eastern (Persia, the Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia, the Yemen); Northern (Scandinavia, and the Soviet Union and its satellites other than Albania); South-East Asia (including Afghanistan, also the Indian sub-continent and Ceylon for those matters affecting the Foreign Offices; the work of the Commissioner-General at Singapore; and matters relating to the Colombo Plan); Southern (all Southern European countries including Turkey, both European and Asiatic, Albania, and Yugoslavia; also the Vatican); and Western Department (Western Europe including France and Germany).

There is, of course, nothing permanent about the details of these geographical arrangements: the pattern is in fact constantly changing to meet new needs. To take but one example: relations with Afghanistan are at present dealt with by the South-East Asia Department, although that country is not in South-East Asia and her cultural affinities are mainly with Hither Asia, simply because at present the most important of her political contacts and problems are those which she has in common with the countries lying to the East of her.

The *functional* departments are nineteen in number; with two exceptions, which will be mentioned presently, they deal with certain types of question irrespective of geographical area and on a world-wide basis. Typical examples are:

The Treaty and Nationality Department, which deals with treaty formalities and a number of matters falling within the sphere of consular work abroad, e.g., the registration of births and deaths of British subjects abroad, the Foreign Enlistment Act, deportation, extradition, and so forth; the Information departments, which deal with all aspects of information policy and arrange the supply and distribution of material in the various information media; the economic departments, which deal with the collection and collation of such general information on economic conditions and problems as is necessary for the formulation of foreign policy; the departments which deal with the implementation of our commitments under the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and other Organisations for mutual defence and

economic co-operation; the departments which deal with general questions concerning the application of the Charter of the United Nations and with matters treated by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Further details will be found in Appendix II on page 206 at the end of this book. Among these functional departments there are two—the Western Organisations Department and the Mutual Aid Department—which are regional in the sense of being less than world-wide in the spheres of interest which they cover, though these spheres are not geographical spheres in the ordinary sense.

There are, at present, not counting the two departments of the German Section, seven *administrative* departments. These may be regarded as ancillary in that they exist to facilitate the work of the political and functional departments by managing the internal administration of the Service at home and abroad. They are:

The Archives Department; the Communications Department (with sub-sections dealing with the diplomatic bag services, telegraphic and telephonic communications, and the Foreign Office branch of the Government Diplomatic Wireless Service); the Conference and Supply Department (dealing with the arrangements for conferences at home and abroad, movements and travel, Foreign Service buildings and transport, and supplies generally); the Establishment and Organisation Department; the Finance Department; the Personnel Department; and the Security Department.

In a separate category are the Research Department and the Library, whose work is closely associated. The Library are responsible for the custody of the archives and printed books, the publication of the Foreign Office correspondence, the provision of miscellaneous information from these and other sources and the guidance of the Foreign Service at home and abroad on office procedure. The Research Department collect and collate background and historical information from unofficial as well as official sources over the whole field of foreign affairs, and present their results in the form of memoranda for the use of the Foreign Office, other Government Departments and the Foreign Service as a whole.

Finally there are two departments, the Passport Office and the Passport Control Department, which perform specialised functions (the issue of British passports, and the grant of visas to the holders of foreign passports) which have only a tenuous and incidental connexion with the main work of the Foreign Service (i.e., the conduct of relations with foreign governments) and no connexion at all with its internal management. They are often included in the

'administrative' group, but are best treated as a class apart.

The Foreign Service organisations abroad are of three main types: diplomatic missions to individual foreign countries; permanent delegations to international bodies; and consular establishments. Organisations of the first two types are controlled direct by the Foreign Office. Consular establishments, on the other hand, are in general subordinated to the heads of the diplomatic missions; though the degree of supervisory control exercised by the latter varies considerably according to circumstances, and for certain purposes there is direct control by the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation. There are also a few abnormal types of organisation abroad, for the most part representing legacies of the second world war.

The first main type of overseas organisation—diplomatic missions to individual foreign countries—consists of embassies, normally headed by ambassadors, and of legations, normally headed by ministers plenipotentiary. At a dozen or so of the minor diplomatic missions the additional rank of consul-general is held by the ambassador or minister. Exceptionally, diplomatic missions may be headed by *chargés d'affaires*. These are of two classes, and the higher in order of official precedence is the *chargé d'affaires en titre* (or, as some prefer to say, *en pied*). He is appointed to conduct his country's diplomatic business in a foreign country when for one reason or another his government has no immediate or foreseeable intention of appointing (or, in very rare cases, cannot for technical reasons appoint) a diplomatic representative of a higher grade, i.e., an ambassador or minister. Hence *chargés d'affaires en titre* are uncommon as a class: there is only one British representative of this sort at the time of writing. Much more often, when the term '*chargé d'affaires*' is used without specifying further, it means a *chargé d'affaires ad interim*. His, as the term implies, is a strictly temporary job. He is appointed to take charge of a diplomatic mission when its titular head is absent from the country (on leave, or on duty, e.g., recalled for consultations) or when there is an interval—as there almost always is, for administrative reasons—between the departure of a titular head on transfer and the arrival of his successor. The title of *chargé d'affaires ad interim* gives no indication of Service rank. It may easily happen, for instance, that a second secretary is called upon to assume temporary charge of an Embassy if the post is a small one. But while he is in charge he is of course treated for purposes of official precedence as the representative (of the lowest diplomatic category) of his country, not as a second secretary.

The second main type of overseas organisation—permanent delegations to international bodies—differs but little from the first in

point of status and structure. The officer in charge of it is normally of the Service rank of ambassador or minister plenipotentiary, though he is not so styled officially. The head of our permanent mission to the United Nations at New York, for instance, is officially—and cumbrously—styled ‘Permanent United Kingdom Representative to the Security Council and United Kingdom Representative on the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission’. At the United Nations organisation in Geneva the title of the representative is ‘Head of the United Kingdom Permanent Delegation to the European Office of the United Nations’. There are ‘Permanent United Kingdom Representatives’ on the North Atlantic Council, on the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, and so on. (Further details will be given in Chapter VIII.) Within the missions of this type the service members of the staff hold, and are known by, the normal titles of commissioned rank—minister, counsellor, first secretary and so forth; and the staff organisation is very similar to that of an embassy or legation, though there is an exceptionally large element of non-Service experts attached or seconded for purposes some of which are more or less transitory.

The third main type of overseas organisation—consular establishments—is divided into three grades: consulates-general, consulates, and vice-consulates. (As we have seen, the heads of some minor diplomatic missions are consuls-general also.) Those in charge of consular posts of the first two grades are for the most part members of the Service; but a few consulates are headed by non-career officers appointed from the United Kingdom (‘U.K.-based’, in technical jargon). These non-career officers receive salaries and allowances on the same scale as members of the Service. Vice-consulates, on the other hand, may be headed by career vice-consuls; or, in a few cases, by non-career vice-consuls appointed from the United Kingdom; or, in a large number of cases, by locally-engaged honorary vice-consuls. These last, again, are of two distinct types, which will be defined presently. The staffs of all three grades of post may consist partly or wholly of non-career personnel.

The system of consular supervision varies according to local circumstances. For reasons of economy in staff and administration, consular establishments in capital cities (which may be of any of the three grades, but are always career posts) are just branches of the diplomatic missions, and are known as the ‘consular sections’ of these missions, the officers in charge of them normally holding both diplomatic and consular rank. All vice-consulates outside the capitals, whether they be career or honorary posts, are under the supervision of nearby career consular officers of higher rank. Most consulates outside the capitals are, similarly, under the supervision

of nearby consuls-general; but a few are directly subordinated to ambassadors or ministers (i.e., to heads of diplomatic missions who are not also consuls-general) in the capitals of the countries in which they are situated.

A career consular officer or a non-career officer appointed from the United Kingdom is styled 'Her Majesty's Consul-General (or Consul, or Vice-Consul) at .....'; a non-career officer of the honorary type is styled 'the British Vice-Consul at .....'. Honorary Vice-Consuls, as stated above, are of two distinct kinds: those who do not also engage in trade, and those who do. The first are mainly retired officers from the fighting Services and retired professional men. Most of them receive salaries, though the scale of remuneration is low, and all of them receive allowances to cover their office expenses. Those who engage in trade, on the other hand, do not normally receive salaries, but are granted either a percentage of the fees taken at their posts or small allowances to cover their incidental expenditure. There are at present about 190 honorary vice-consuls of the trading kind. Some of them are foreign nationals, but the number of these is dwindling rapidly. (Before the last war there were about ninety in charge of posts; now there are less than a score, mostly Scandinavians.)

The Foreign Service organisations overseas that cannot be classed under any of the three main types described above are, as already stated, for the main part legacies of the last world war. Germany, for instance, is still (November, 1953) considered as an occupied country, and our relations with the Federal German Government are conducted through an Allied High Commission. The United Kingdom is therefore represented in Bonn by a High Commissioner, who, although he holds the personal rank of Ambassador, is not accredited to the Federal Government. It is the policy of the Western Powers to bring into force as soon as possible the so-called 'Bonn Conventions' which will terminate the occupation of the Western Zones of Germany, and we shall then establish normal diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic. The position in Germany will still, however, be different from that in other countries, since it will be necessary to retain the principle of quadripartite responsibility for the future unification of Germany and the conclusion of a Peace Treaty, and for the city of Berlin. Our future Ambassador will continue to be, as the High Commissioner is now, a member of the Four-Power Allied Control Council in Berlin, where he is represented by a British General acting as Commandant of the United Kingdom Sector. In Austria, we have a regular diplomatic mission headed by an ambassador; but this officer also holds the title, and performs the duties, of High Commissioner in the still-surviving Allied Commis-

sion for Austria. Another organisation of a special kind is the British Middle East Office, already referred to on page 24, which is headed by a senior officer of ambassadorial standing. The Office has its headquarters in Egypt and maintains a 'Development Division' in the Lebanon which is in the charge of a Foreign Service Officer of the rank of counsellor but consists for the most part of non-service advisers (experts on agriculture, animal husbandry, the co-operative movement, forestry and soil conservation, and other subjects). In Malaya the (non-Foreign Service) 'Commissioner General for Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in South-East Asia' has the personal rank of ambassador, and most of the two dozen administrative officers on his staff are of the Foreign Service. Finally in the Persian Gulf, at Bahrain, there is a 'Political Resident' who is himself a member of the Foreign Service and is assisted mainly by a Foreign Service staff, some of the senior members of which reside as his representatives in other Gulf Sheikhdoms.

The diplomatic missions and consular establishments, it need scarcely be said, vary enormously in size. It is unnecessary, and would indeed be somewhat invidious, to give particulars showing the precise order of priority among them according to size, but it may be stated by way of illustration that at the largest of the Missions--Washington--there are 28 Branch A officers alone, whereas at some of the smallest there is only one. Consular establishments, which of course far outnumber the Diplomatic Missions, are much smaller on the average, though the largest of them are considerably larger than the smallest Mission. Two Permanent Delegations to international bodies--those at New York and Paris, the latter being accredited both to the North Atlantic Council and to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation--rank with the largest of the Embassies in point of size.

We come now to the question of what the Foreign Service costs. The figures that follow are taken from the original estimates for the financial year 1953-54. These provided for expenditure on the German Section of the Foreign Office under a separate Vote. To take first the expenditure under the main Foreign Service Vote, the total expenditure estimated for the year 1953-54 on salaries and allowances for Foreign Service staff abroad was rather less than eight and one third million pounds; that for the staff at home was rather more than two and a half million pounds. There are two reasons for the greater proportional expense of maintaining the staff overseas: first, the need for 'representational' expenditure on a much larger scale; and secondly the very high cost of living (measured in terms of sterling) which obtains in many foreign countries at present. It is

worth emphasising here that much the greater part of this item labelled 'salaries and allowances', particularly in so far as it applies to the staff abroad, is expended on what may fairly be called the business of official living, and therefore does not represent real earnings for the recipients.

Salaries and allowances naturally constitute by far the largest single item of expenditure. The other main items, in order of importance, are as follows:

*Communications: total £1,167,500*

Made up of:	£
Travelling expenses of Queen's Messengers and couriers ... ..	280,000
Carriage and postage ... ..	200,000
Telegrams ... ..	200,000
Telephones ... ..	145,000
Technical Equipment and Services ... ..	342,500
	<hr/> £1,167,500

*Transport: total £1,282,500*

Made up of:	£
Journeys on the public service abroad ... ..	565,000
Journeys on the public service at home ... ..	75,000
Initial cost of official transport ... ..	135,500
Maintenance of official transport ... ..	245,000
Wages of drivers, etc. ... ..	262,000
	<hr/> £1,282,500

(NOTE: The first item covers, amongst other things, all staff transfers and journeys on leave where cost falls on public funds.)

*Incidental Expenses and Hostels: total £415,700*

Made up of:	£
Incidental expenses abroad ... ..	360,000
Incidental expenses at home ... ..	32,000
Hostels in the United Kingdom, general expenses	13,800
Hostels in the United Kingdom, wages ... ..	9,900
	<hr/> £415,700

(NOTE: the hostels in question are maintained for the accommodation of personnel of the lower grades who are engaged in communications work at outstations.)

*Medical Attendance: total £100,000*

*Outfits: total £80,000*

*Compassionate Gratuities: total £15,000*

(NOTE: these are paid, on retirement or discharge, to certain temporary and locally-engaged subordinate employees abroad.)

<i>Compensation for loss of effects, damage, etc.:</i>	£ 5,000
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<i>Gross Total (including salaries and allowances)</i>	£14,003,700
<i>Deduct Appropriations in Aid amounting to</i>	1,265,200
(NOTE: By far the largest items of Appropriations in Aid are passport, visa and consular fees.)	
<i>Net Total</i> ... ..	£12,738,500

In addition must be reckoned the sum of £4,400,000 estimated to be the cost of services performed on behalf of the Foreign Office by the Ministry of Works, H.M. Stationery Office and the General Post Office. These services include the provision and maintenance of office and residential accommodation; the supply of stationery; and postal and telephone services. The total estimated cost of running the Foreign Service in 1953/54, excluding the German Section, was therefore £17,100,000. The total cost of running the German Section, computed on the same basis as above, was £2,645,349. (As our commitments in Germany diminish this figure will, of course, decrease appreciably.)

In short, then, the Service which conducts virtually the whole complex of our country's relations with the world outside the Commonwealth consists at present of some 13,000 persons (including the 2,830 members of the German Section Staff which is steadily running down), and costs a little under £20 million a year.<sup>1</sup>

It is not necessary to dilate upon the relative modesty of these aggregates of staff and cost beyond pointing out that at present the total number of civil servants on the pay-roll of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, excluding the large industrial category, is still round about 650,000, and that the sum of £20 million is approximately what it costs to build a large aircraft carrier.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This figure covers, with one small exception, everything that can properly be regarded as making up the yearly cost of the Foreign Service at the present time. The exception is the cost (about £15,500) of maintaining the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies, a training institution in the Lebanon, used largely, though not exclusively, by the Foreign Service. It does not include expenditure such as grants-in-aid and loans by the United Kingdom to other countries, the United Kingdom contributions to the expenses of the United Nations and other international organisations, etc., which, though necessary to the execution of British foreign policy, is not part of the cost of the Foreign Service.

<sup>2</sup> To some people it may perhaps seem pointless to attempt a comparison between these two things, seeing that the one falls under the heading of maintenance costs and the other under that of capital outlay. Admittedly there is no fully valid basis of comparison. But the two things have this in common: both are items of Government expenditure designed to maintain national efficiency at a certain level in relation to the outside world. For those who feel that one can only compare annually recurring costs of one kind with annually recurring costs of another, it may be said, that the Government's expenditure on general dental services (England and Wales only) for the financial year 1953-54 was estimated at about £19 million net.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Recruitment and Training*

THOUGH the purpose of this book is to give an account of the contemporary Foreign Service rather than to describe its past, one cannot fully understand what the Service is now without a retrospective glance at what it used to be—or rather at what those once separate entities used to be which now jointly comprise it.

The British Foreign Service of to-day is an amalgam of what were once five separate organisations: The Foreign Office, the Diplomatic Service, the Consular Service, the Commercial Diplomatic Service and the overseas Information Services. 'Amalgamation' is the word commonly used to describe the process which took place, and it will be used in this and later chapters; but it may be well to explain here at the outset that there was in fact a virtually complete assimilation. The five organisations were not just brought together under a single authority as still-distinct parts of a whole, but were fused with one another to make the whole. What this fusion means in practice will be explained more fully later. Here it is enough to emphasise that so far as the staffing of the Service is concerned there are no longer any separate entities. One may, for example, speak of 'the information element in the Service'—meaning those members of the Service who, at the given moment, are engaged on information work; but not of 'the Information Services' as of a separate cadre within the framework of the Service.

Of these five former organisations, the first three had been long established at the moment of fusion, whereas the last two—the Commercial Diplomatic Service and the Information Services—had had a comparatively short and easily-described history. It will be convenient, therefore, to deal first and briefly with the last two before going on to consider the origins of the older elements in the amalgam.

The Commercial Diplomatic Service dates from the end of the first world war, when it was set up under the joint control of the then newly-established Department of Overseas Trade and the Foreign Office. It developed from the corps of Commercial Attachés who first began to be appointed to some of the larger diplomatic missions abroad in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and whose work had steadily grown in volume and importance as international trade became increasingly the concern of governments.

The Information Services evolved out of the corps of Press Attachés who, between the two world wars, were appointed to the more important posts abroad to advise our ambassadors and ministers on the public opinion of the countries concerned, as reflected in the press, and to keep in touch with journalists both British and foreign. During the second world war their work was taken over and expanded by the Ministry of Information, which remained in charge of all overseas Information Services till 1946, when the Foreign Service absorbed those affecting foreign countries.

Before the emergence of the Commercial and Press Attachés and the organisations which descended from them, British relations with foreign countries had been conducted, without the help of such specialists, by the three older elements of the amalgam: the Foreign Office, the Diplomatic Service and the Consular Service. In those days, of course, press contacts and publicity were very much less important; and the general run of commercial work (as distinct from such things as the negotiation of commercial treaties) could be coped with by consuls. It is not proposed here to describe the historical evolution of these three services in any detail. The history (till 1933) of the home department is well and fully described in a book entitled *The Foreign Office* by the late Sir John Tilley and the late Sir Stephen Gaselee. Much has been written about the origins of present-day diplomatic and consular practice, and something will be said of these origins in a later chapter. All that need be stated here is that although British diplomatic and consular representatives were appointed abroad to an increasing extent during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a career diplomatic service with its own regular staff and a properly organised system of administration did not exist until the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Consular Service as such also emerged gradually during the nineteenth century—developing, that is, as a General Consular Service with in addition a number of specialised services for China, Japan, Siam and the Levant. It did not take final shape until 1903. Shortly after the first world war the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service were amalgamated, and their staffs, which had been separate, became in theory interchangeable (though there were certain practical limitations which will be described later). In 1936 the specialised regional consular services were merged with the General Consular Service into a single entity.

It will thus be seen that the separate elements on which the modern Foreign Service is founded were constantly evolving in order to adapt themselves to changes in the nature and conduct of foreign relations, and that in doing so they tended to become more unified. The influence that had been at work in shaping their evolution was

the development of diplomacy itself—the growth, in terms both of sheer bulk and of intrinsic importance, of foreign relationships, and the gradual invasion of these relationships by economic and publicity problems. If, for example, British Foreign Secretaries had been able to continue handling external affairs at home with the help of purely clerical assistants only (as they could and did till well on in the nineteenth century), the Foreign Office as a department would never have evolved to the point at which amalgamation became a possibility. And if diplomatic relationships had continued to be—or at any rate to be treated as—a matter of politics exclusively, the segregation of the diplomatic cadre from the consular, as it existed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, would have remained a practical and natural thing.

The present Foreign Service is the product of reforms which were sponsored by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Anthony Eden, and approved by Parliament in 1943. A full description of them will be found in the text, reproduced in Appendix III on page 214, of the White Paper of January, 1943, entitled *Proposals for the Reform of the Foreign Service* (Cmd.6420). The 1943 reforms had a single objective: to make the Foreign Service a more efficient instrument of foreign policy. Broadly speaking, they approached this objective in two ways: by adapting the actual structure of the Service to modern requirements; and by so reorganising its staff as to offer a worth-while career to all its members. The most important step towards the first of these objectives was the amalgamation of the Commercial Diplomatic Service and the Consular Service with the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service. This had the effect not only of combining the functions of these separate organisations under a single unified Foreign Service, but also of pooling their staffs. Positions which had once been the preserve of members of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, including the highest positions in the Foreign Office and abroad, became accessible to any member of the combined Service; and all members of this Service became liable, in theory, to perform any of the types of work which had once been reserved to one or other of the pre-war services. As we have already seen, the process of amalgamation was completed in 1946 by the taking over of the overseas Information Services from the Ministry of Information.

The Eden reforms gave the new Foreign Service a complete and self-contained staff organisation. Till 1943 the only people who really belonged to the various services then existing were officers who held positions equivalent to those now held by members of the senior branch of the amalgamated Service. Subordinate staff serving at home were members of the Home Civil Service; and

abroad they were recruited locally—in which case they remained unestablished and normally unpensionable. As a result of the reforms the Foreign Service became a separate and self-contained Service of the Crown, and acquired its own permanent and pensionable staff—who, apart from the so-called 'messengerial grades' serving exclusively abroad, could be employed anywhere. The Service was divided into the four branches (A, B, C and D) which have been mentioned in the previous chapter. These branches were designed to be so administered that each would afford a complete career in itself; but provision was also made for advancement from Branch C to Branch B and from Branch B to Branch A.

These changes did much to widen the opportunities open to people in the Service to attain positions corresponding both to their merits and to their natural aptitudes. But there were other reforms designed to widen the opportunities of entry into the Service. The pre-war method of entry had been open to the criticism that it tended to exclude many people who might have made good diplomatists but who lacked the financial means to prepare for the examination. This examination consisted of a number of long and difficult written papers, followed by an interview before a Board. The standard required in the written papers, particularly those designed to test a candidate's knowledge of foreign languages, was such that they could not usually be taken without intensive and specialised cramming; and this, for most prospective candidates, meant amongst other things the necessity for courses of study abroad at private expense.

The reforms made it easier for people with little or no private means to enter the Service, by providing an entrance examination which could be taken without any special preparation. Two kinds of examination were in fact proposed. One was to be a modified form of the pre-war written examination; the other was to be designed particularly to test personality and innate ability as distinct from prowess in academic examinations. As will be seen later, it is this second kind that has been developed since the war as the normal method of entry into Branch A.

It was realised when this reform was proposed that it would have practical disadvantages as well as advantages. It would tend to produce recruits drawn from a wider social sphere, and this was all to the good. But some, at any rate, of these recruits might not have had the same opportunities as the pre-war entrants had had to acquire an all-round education and in particular an adequate knowledge of foreign languages; and such knowledge is part of the essential equipment of a diplomatist. Provision was therefore made for new entrants to the Service to be given training in languages at the

expense of the State. Other courses of study were also provided, and it was intended that they should, in particular, fit junior officers for the specialised economic and commercial work which any of them might be called upon to perform as members of a non-specialist service.

These steps towards a broadening of the social basis of the Service were accompanied by various financial measures designed to enable its members to play their full part at home and abroad without the assistance of private means.

For obvious reasons, many of the changes which have been described could not be introduced until after the war. Some have not yet been fully carried out. But the primary aim of the reforms—to create a cohesive yet flexible structure which would enable the Service to adapt itself to changing demands upon it—is already well on the road to being attained. The manner in which this has been done is something that we must now consider more closely.

A public service is always liable to be criticised for failing to respond to social and other developments in the country which it serves. The Foreign Service is by no means immune from such criticism; and the 1943 reforms, as has been said, were intended to remedy a number of defects in the pre-war Service which had provoked adverse public comment. It is worth while to examine some of the more common complaints which were made about the pre-war Services (between which, in point of fact, the critics seldom distinguished), since they are relevant to any considered estimate of what the 1943 reforms have achieved.

The British diplomatist of past times was commonly said to have several grave defects. On the assumption that he had been recruited from a rigorously restricted social class—an assumption which was no longer justified from the end of the first world war onwards—he was accused of being incapable for this reason of representing fairly the interests of the nation as a whole; of having led too sheltered a life in his own class to be able to understand economic and social questions; and of consorting through social prejudice with too narrow a section of the population in the countries where he served. These criticisms were not entirely without substance, though they showed a good deal of muddled thinking and also much ignorance of the evolutionary process that had been going on long before 1943.

As indicated above, it is not true that in the decade immediately before 1943 (when these criticisms were still being loudly expressed) all British diplomatists came from one restricted class, though they did indeed almost all come from roughly the same academic stratum. Had it been true, moreover, it would not have followed necessarily

that their restricted social origins rendered them incapable of representing fairly the nation's interests as a whole. If indeed this had been the corollary, then it would also have followed that the problem of securing adequate diplomatic representation was permanently insoluble. It was never, it appears, suggested even by the most biased critic that while this allegedly exclusive class of British diplomatists could not represent British interests as a whole, there was some other particular class that could. Rather was it implied that any diplomatist could represent his own class only, and that consequently there ought to be the widest possible diversity of social classes in the diplomatic service. Possibly the analogy behind such suggestions was that of the social cross-section which is to be found in democratic parliamentary representation. But the Foreign Service is not a parliament: it is not charged with debating—still less with adjusting—the conflicting interests of social groups within the nation. Its duty is to represent abroad the unified product of such debate and consequential adjustment by others. And there are upwards of seventy diplomatic missions to fill. If therefore it were true that any one diplomatist is capable of representing the interests of his own class only, it would follow that to fill these seventy-odd posts with an assortment of people from widely different classes would merely create throughout the world a mass of differing British representational attitudes such as would make any tolerably consistent foreign policy unattainable. There would be a cross-section indeed; but there would be no usable instrument. Fortunately it is not true. There is in fact a very considerable diversity of social origins in the present-day Service; but not for the reason suggested by the criticism which has been mentioned above. And the fact that the Service works harmoniously as a usable instrument shows the criticism to be unsound. The British diplomatist has at all times prided himself, and not without justification, on scrupulously suppressing his own individual viewpoint and loyally representing the national attitude as embodied in that of the Government of the day.

On the other hand it is of course unquestionable that ability and intelligence are not the monopoly of any one class, and that a widening of the field of selection must consequently tend to enhance the standard of competence, provided that the necessary educational facilities exist for turning innate ability and intelligence into a finished working tool. In so far as this was the real argument of the critics, they were always on sound theoretical ground; though there were times when both social conditions and the absence of the necessary educational facilities prevented the translation of theory into practice, and the second of these two obstacles has still to be com-

pletely overcome. The truth is, that the systems of selection for the Diplomatic Service, never stationary for long, were mainly governed in the earlier phases by the limiting factor of a social prejudice which was not merely insular but world-wide; and, in the later phases, exclusively by the need for academic qualifications—a need which was related to social prejudice in this indirect sense only, that there were still links between education and wealth and between wealth and birth.

So long as the conduct of foreign affairs in most countries remained the preserve of social oligarchies with an acute sense of class—and this was so till the early years of the twentieth century—there were compelling practical reasons for choosing candidates for the diplomatic career from the most intelligent members of a restricted social stratum, however regrettable the class system itself might be. When, however, class prejudice ceased to dominate the pattern of international life, the methods of selection for the British Diplomatic Service could be, and were, gradually changed to the extent allowed by the continuing need for academic qualifications. By the end of the first world war what used to be known as 'birth' had ceased to be a criterion for the selection of entrants; and so had wealth in itself (that is, wealth not transmuted into educational attainments). It was no longer required of a candidate that he should possess private means; and people were being accepted who had managed to work their way through university education on scholarships.

This was a considerable advance towards the ideal of a free field and the maximum of choice; but the field was still restricted by the fact that scholarships were confined for the most part to private endowment. As State aid for education developed, the entrance doors to the diplomatic career could be opened still wider, and were. But the process was necessarily gradual, and has not yet been completed. The Foreign Office can move no faster towards fully democratic methods of selection than the State as a whole is moving in its educational policies, though it has already moved far at the pace set for it by this wider process of political evolution. The fact is that the Foreign Service always must and will recruit from the best, in brains and character, that the prevailing educational system can produce.

Let us turn now to the other items on the charge-sheet. It has not for a long time been true that British diplomatists consort, by choice and through social prejudice, with a restricted social class in the countries where they serve. There has indeed been no reason why they should, seeing that they themselves have long ceased to spring exclusively from one class. It is on the other hand true that they con-



sort mainly with the people who are politically of most importance, irrespective of the class or classes to which these people may belong.

The reason is simply that they have a full working day, and must therefore confine their contacts in the main to those people who are most worth cultivating from the point of view of the job: In many countries, though by no means all, the governing social oligarchies have indeed disappeared; but in all countries there are small groups of people—socially homogeneous in some, socially disparate in others—who form the mainspring of national policy and count for much more, in terms of practical influence over the state's actions, than the general run of their fellow-citizens. The contemporary British diplomatist, regardless of his own social origins, must continue to concentrate chiefly on these influential groups of people as he has always done in the past. He has, in fact, to cope with the world as it actually is, not with what the reformers and innovators think the world should be.

It may be true, again, that some few of the British diplomatists recruited before 1943 tended (and still tend) to possess an inadequate grasp of social and economic questions. One may, however, legitimately doubt whether this defect derived from the social origins of such persons even in the period, now fairly remote, when these origins really were socially restricted. What is certainly true is that no one can acquire real competence in these important matters without practical training and experience. This is recognised by the present training policy of the Service. Whenever possible new recruits are given a course of initial training in which they may obtain both an insight into the economic work of the Service itself, and—through visits to industries, social services, and so on—a picture of the economic and social life of their country. The Service also aims at giving its younger members some practical experience of commercial or economic work in the first few years of their careers.

But, although the Foreign Service attaches great importance to equipping the modern diplomatist with the requisite knowledge in these vital fields, it also recognises that in foreign affairs economics is not everything. The impact of economics on politics is admittedly enormous, and certainly cannot be ignored. But there are many other factors which count for much in foreign relations—notably such things as nationalist sentiment, religious antagonisms and the divergences of racial mentality. No sensible European or American would wish, for example, to deny the need for helping to raise the standard of living in the under-developed countries of Asia and Africa; and the Foreign Office appreciates this need as well as any-

body. But a good many publicists in Europe and America seem to imagine that such help is all that is required for a successful marriage of East with West. The diplomatist for his part, living his life in a succession of different countries and in direct contact with their populations, is under no temptation to under-estimate the non-economic factors operating in international life. He knows from practical experience that they are extremely powerful; and sometimes, when he says so, he is accused of being blind to economic realities and of lagging behind the times. In this, as in so many other matters, his sense of the practical complexity of the world abroad is apt to get him into trouble with the generalising idealists. He may be personally quite as progressive and forward-looking as they; but he cannot, in his work, afford to ignore things as they are.

We have seen, then, that the reforms of 1943, though tending towards the single objective of creating a more efficient instrument of foreign policy, approached this objective by two main and distinct methods: first, the fusion into a homogeneous entity of the human material which was already there but labouring under the handicap of a patchwork organisation; and secondly, the obtaining of still better human material in the future by widening the field of choice. But there were other and subsidiary reforms tending in the same direction. Perhaps the most important of these in point of principle was the stimulus given to promotion from junior to senior branches of the Service, and particularly from Branch B to Branch A. This was in fact an application of the second main method of reform to the ranks of the Service itself. Such promotions were not indeed an entirely new departure. They had for long been going on; but only on a very small scale. To stimulate them was a natural development of the democratic trend of the reforms as a whole. The reforms provided that younger members of the subordinate branches who were of exceptional merit should be allowed to be considered for admission to Branch A with other outside candidates competing for that branch. Provision was also made for promotion to Branch A of more senior members of the subordinate branches.

Three avenues for promotion to Branch A from within the Service have since been established. First, there is a Competition for a number of posts in Branch A which is held annually by the Civil Service Commission, and is limited to members of Branch B and Branch C between the ages of 25 and 30 who have done at least three years' service and are nominated by the Foreign Office. Second, there are facilities for promotion to Grade 7 in Branch A of Branch B officers with about 15 to 20 years' experience who are recommended by a Promotions Board; and finally there is an arrange-

ment whereby, again on the recommendation of the Promotions Board, Branch B officers may be transferred to Grade 6 of Branch A in the later stages of their careers. Arrangements also exist for promotion of Branch C personnel, chosen on the basis of merit and seniority, to the most junior grade of Branch B.

Another reform, subsidiary but not unimportant, aimed at lessening the rigidity of the connexion between mere seniority and promotion by facilitating superannuation. In every established service there are those who, though satisfactory as subordinates and entirely conscientious, prove incapable for one reason or another of bearing the responsibilities of high rank and office. If they cannot be pensioned off before the normally-prescribed age of retirement, it is harsh to dismiss them unpensioned when they are already too old to stand much chance of finding other jobs. But if, for this reason of humanity, they must be retained in the service, they tend to clog the machine. Work at the higher levels of the Foreign Service imposes a very heavy strain of responsibility: in the nation's affairs there are but few sorts of transaction that have not at least a potential importance. Until 1943 the minimum retiring age at which a pension could be granted was rigorously fixed at sixty. As part of the reforms, it was made possible for the Secretary of State to terminate an officer's service in certain circumstances before that age had been reached, without implication of disgrace and on a pension. If the officer so retired is in his late forties or in his fifties the pension he receives, though not large, is enough to keep him from actual want. If on the other hand he is retired earlier in his career—and it does occasionally happen that temperamental unsuitability is revealed quite early—the pension is, of course, almost negligible, but he is still young enough to obtain other work.

The second of the two main methods of reform referred to above needed subsidisation in that the Service ceased to be staffed by people with private means to spend on public duties. Pay and allowances had to be made adequate for the private and professional needs of people who had nothing else to live on. The first method also needed subsidisation, for reasons perhaps rather less obvious. Fusion of the existing elements could not be brought about merely by decreeing that they should consider themselves fused: money was needed, as well as organising adjustment, in order to make them so. To some extent indeed this was an interdepartmental paper transaction only, and imposed as such no additional burden on the taxpayer. One element—the Information Services—was already on the government payroll though outside the control and financial responsibility of the Foreign Office, and its absorption into the new amalgam consequently increased Service expenditure with-

out increasing the national expenditure as a whole. There was, however, a second element, consisting of subordinate clerical employees of the Foreign Office, which was virtually immobilised at home through belonging to the Home Civil Service. These subordinate employees could indeed be sent abroad if they volunteered, but had for the most part no incentive to do so. For them, the additional governmental expenditure required was the money needed to make them fully mobile. A third element consisted of subordinate employees abroad who were immobilised through being locally recruited, unestablished and normally unpensionable. These could not be moved from post to post, because in such circumstances their lives after retirement depended on the retention of their local roots. To make them both established and mobile, additional governmental expenditure was needed. By no means all the locally-recruited personnel employed abroad could be brought thus fully into the Service; but a large number were, in the interests of security, efficiency and corporate loyalty. They had, in fact, been doing jobs for which both justice and prudence required the conferment of established status.

It was not, moreover, among the junior employees only that obstacles to full mobility and interchangeability had to be surmounted at a certain cost. It has been said above that the Foreign Office was amalgamated with the Diplomatic Service after the first world war. From then on there was, indeed, a fairly complete though non-compulsory interchangeability of staff between them. Nevertheless the members of the Foreign Office continued to be considered, and treated in matters of pay, as members of the Home Civil Service when they were not serving abroad. The result was that, though interchangeability did exist between these two elements of the pre-1943 Service, it existed partly at the expense of the individuals comprising them. Whenever an officer was brought home for a period of service in the Foreign Office he suffered a good deal of financial hardship. Not only was there no adequate official provision for some of the incidental expenses of his move—a hardship which applied also to officers sent abroad; there was no provision at all for the special difficulties which he would encounter in the United Kingdom through being a bird of passage. During these periods of service at home he could not plan his life—his housing arrangements, the education of his children, and so forth—on anything like the same economical long-term basis as government officials living permanently in London.

To put an end to these and other anomalies special financial aid was required. The total amount was indeed very small in relation to the practical value to the nation of acquiring a self-

contained and fully mobile vehicle of external policy; but it is nevertheless worth emphasising that the reforms did need money for their execution, and were not merely an internal re-shuffle such as the Foreign Office might at any time have carried out by way of putting its own house in order. Moreover, the authors of the reforms had considerable administrative difficulties to overcome, and their task was not achieved without some controversy. It was, for example, long regarded in official circles outside the Foreign Office as inadmissible that any one group of government employees serving at home should be treated differently in financial matters from the rest.

It is worth mentioning here that the main impetus towards the reforms came from within the supposedly closed circle, from members of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service. The necessity both of amalgamating the services and of widening the field of choice was urged most strongly by precisely that 'mandarin' class of British diplomatists which was popularly supposed to be so jealous of its privileges and oblivious of its deficiencies.

Since we are concerned chiefly with the present, it is unnecessary to give here a full account of those organisational adjustments which were required, in addition to financial subsidisation, in order to realise in practice the underlying objects of the reforms. One thing that was needed, for instance, was a more exact system for designating rank in the various newly-created branches of the Service. In the administrative hierarchies of the diplomatists and consuls, for instance, the rank indicated in an officer's royal commission was no longer a sufficient label. Once a consular officer could at any stage of his career be transferred to diplomatic work in an embassy, and replaced by a man hitherto engaged on diplomatic work, it became necessary to establish exactly what the corresponding levels were, since there were only three consular ranks; and similarly with promotions from the junior to the senior branches of the Service. Again, the title of ambassador had, for reasons given elsewhere, become considerably debased through the raising to embassy status of many quite minor diplomatic missions, and consequently no longer conferred a position necessarily superior to that of a minister plenipotentiary. A short description of the present hierarchical system has already been given in the previous chapter. Commissioned rank is still, of course, the only label used in contacts with the outside world: an officer of a certain grade is known to his foreign colleagues as a Counsellor, and (mercifully) not as a 'Grade 6 Official of Branch A'. But within the Service, and for all administrative purposes, it is this latter—and admittedly rather dreary—form of classification that counts.

This was a necessary and fairly complicated organisational reform, but one that presented no great difficulties of principle. A much more serious and inherently difficult problem was created by the fact that the various services of which the amalgam was composed were of widely different sizes. If the principle of interchangeability of personnel within the amalgamated Service was to be fully translated into practice, each serving officer would have to go through a broadly similar training during the early years of his career in all the four main types of work. But how could this be achieved with a (pre-amalgamation) consular cadre much bigger than the diplomatic, and with commercial and 'information' cadres much smaller than either of the first two? The short answer is that it could not be achieved in full, at any rate at the start. Absolute interchangeability resulting from an equal training in each type of work is an ideal that can only be reached by slow stages and will not, in all probability, be fully realised for many years to come. It is fairly safe to assume, indeed, that the next few decades will see a steady proportionate increase in the number of those engaged on commercial and information work. For the present, however, the new entrant into the amalgamated Service is not likely to gain during the first few years of his career an exactly equal insight into all the five main branches of its activity. Even if he could, a fairly large measure of career specialisation would still, of course, be necessary in the interests of general efficiency; for specialisation (over and above preliminary training) is the only way to produce really competent experts.

Nevertheless the amalgamating principle of the reforms has meant an enormous advance. As time goes on, and the members of the Service who are now junior rise to the top, there will be few in responsible positions who have not at least a good general understanding, derived from practical experience, of all branches of the work. And, within limits, each officer will be able to adopt the branch for which he feels best fitted after a trial run in all or most of them. Personal choice must, of course, be restricted to some extent by the requirements of the Service, but the natural diversity of talent and inclination should suffice to make unwelcome appointments the exception. Above all, the amalgamation has put an end to segregating barriers which in the past created exclusiveness and a spirit of clique. The popular idea of these defects in the old system is in point of fact over-simplified. It is not true that there was simply a diplomatic class which looked down on all the rest—the consuls, the commercial and information specialists and even the Foreign Office staff—while the rest disliked the diplomats for doing so. Consular officers for their part were apt to regard their own

work as the only practical kind, and diplomacy as a survival of dilettantism. Commercial diplomatic officers, like most specialists in economics, were similarly inclined to imagine that they alone were at grips with realities beneath a tangle of political make-believe and flummery. These and other similar prejudices were the inevitable outcome of segregation. They cannot survive the effects of intermingling and a common basis of training; and their demise would by itself suffice to make the reforms worth while.

With this general account of past conditions as a background, the present system can now be described in broad outline. There are two main principles which govern it. First, every man and woman now in any of the four branches of the Service, irrespective of the date of joining it, is established, and pensionable, and really belongs to it: is fully mobile (with the exception of Branch D, the personnel of which serves exclusively abroad though it is nowadays mobile within this limitation), in that he or she can at any time be employed anywhere, as the exigencies of the Service may dictate: and is, if recruited after 1943, unspecialised in the sense of being trained for, and liable to be assigned to, any type of work done in the branch to which he or she belongs—the four main types of work, to which each branch contributes its part, being diplomatic, consular, commercial and information. Secondly, every man and woman belonging to any of the first three branches (there is no normal promotion from Branch D, which consists of night guards and office and chancery messengers) has a chance of reaching the higher positions in the Service.

So much for the two main principles in operation. The methods of selection which flow from them are broadly as follows. For entry at the normal age into Branch A and Branch B there are open competitive examinations conducted by the Civil Service Commission.

The normal competition for Branch A, which is held annually, is open to men and women between the ages of 20½ and 24, with a deductible allowance of age for any period of service in the Armed Forces. Candidates are normally required to have, or to obtain in the year in which they sit for the examination, a second class honours degree, or better, awarded at a recognised University. Candidates who do not possess this qualification are required to prove to the examiners that they are of the necessary educational standard by attaining a level equivalent to at least that of a second class honours degree in a full written examination which is set separately from the normal one. The ordinary method of examination is as follows: there is first a short written examination, which includes an oral test in a foreign language—the language test being designed to

assess a candidate's general aptitude as a linguist rather than his or her proficiency in a particular language. Candidates who are successful in this examination (usually about 60 per cent. of the field) go before the Civil Service Selection Board. This body, which is a development of the War Office Selection Boards employed for the selection of officers during the last war, used to conduct its examinations in a country house near London, and so acquired the nickname of 'the country house party'. It now sits in London. It is under the chairmanship of a former Civil Servant, and its staff includes some active Home Civil Servants, a member of the Foreign Service on loan, and some professional psychologists. Candidates are examined for three days in groups. Each of these groups is subdivided into two syndicates, and each syndicate is under a chairman, an observer and a psychologist who are members of the selecting staff. The examination consists of a series of tests, some written some oral, and a number of personal interviews. These tests are of two kinds: pure intelligence tests, designed to assess innate intellectual capacity, and practical exercises, designed to test character and ability, e.g., group discussions and committee work on an administrative problem. Each candidate is interviewed separately by the chairman, observer and psychologist of his syndicate.

In marking and assessing candidates, the Board takes into account not only their performance during the three days of tests and interviews, but also their previous records and reports from their schools and universities. Except for a few who are eliminated before the final stage, all candidates who have been examined by this Board are interviewed before a Final Selection Board. This sits under the chairmanship of the First Civil Service Commissioner, and its members include representatives of industry, the trade unions and universities, as well as serving Civil Servants and members, active and retired, of the Foreign Service. In the light of all available evidence this Board gives each candidate a final mark and decides which candidates should be declared successful.

Those successful in this competition are appointed to Grade 9 with the rank of Third Secretary. They are on probation for three years, or for longer if necessary, and during the period of probation they are expected to satisfy the Service authorities that they are suitable for permanent employment. Those who complete their probation successfully are confirmed in their appointments; those who do not may be required to leave the Service.

For Branch B the normal entry is at two levels: to Grade 6 (corresponding roughly to the Clerical Class of the Home Civil Service) between the ages of 16 and 18 years; and to Grade 5 (corresponding roughly to the Executive Class of the Home Civil Service)



between the ages of 17½ and 19 years. The open competitions for both these types of entry take place twice a year. For Grade 5 there is a written examination, followed by appearance before an Interview Board. For Grade 6 there is also a written examination followed by a less formal interview at the Foreign Office. In addition there is an annual competition, open to university graduates, for entry into Grade 5, and special competitions are held, at both levels, for men and women who have served on regular engagements in the Armed Forces, and for young men who have completed a period of compulsory service under the National Service Acts. For Branch C, consisting of women exclusively, entry is by what is known as the open competitive examination of the Civil Service for the Typing Class.

All these examinations, tests and interviews naturally vary in scope and difficulty according to the branch and category of entry within each branch. The personality tests for Branch A, described above, have been the subject of a good deal of public comment (and of an enjoyably misleading novel by Sir A. P. Herbert). And the general impression is perhaps that the older method of selection—consisting in popular imagination of written examination followed by a gentlemanly interview to establish merely whether the candidate wore the right sort of clothes and could control his aspirates—has been replaced by something quite different but on the whole even worse. The modern candidate (it is commonly believed) can dispense with much of the book-learning and most of the old-fashioned social graces; but he must possess in place of these accomplishments a thick armour of brass, for he is exposed to all the wiles and prying of the professional psychiatrist. It is believed, in short, that the old form of examination tended to favour the all-too cultured bookworm and 'paper man', whereas the new form tends to favour those who can sail through transatlantic intelligence tests of the sort which defeat and humiliate the ordinary man without revealing genuine mental inferiority. Maybe this legend is fostered a little—the temptation is certainly there—by those who got into the Service under the old dispensation and feel sure they would have failed under the new. The truth is, of course, rather different. The present methods of selection do not favour the merely brazen. But they do make it possible to devote far more attention than could be given under the earlier system to the assessment of innate ability and character as distinct from academic competence, evidence of which now depends largely on a candidate's possession of at least a second class honours degree or on his success in the long written examination mentioned above.

The fact is that the former system of mainly written tests, with emphasis on high proficiency in foreign languages, had to be abandoned for at least two good reasons. It tended to place too much emphasis on attainments more likely to be within the reach of the well-to-do than of others; and, though extremely stiff, it was not well adapted to the conditions of modern international life. Something was needed to replace it that would reveal more, by direct and conversational methods, of the candidate's general ability over and above his knowledge. In point of fact the older sort of test had included an interview with a selection board, and this interview had always counted for a good deal: it was intended to probe the candidate's personality and innate capacity, and not merely to ascertain whether he conformed to an approved social pattern. But it was too short to be reliable in all cases, for there are some who can bluff very well for an hour or so, and others who do not begin to shine till the first hour or so is past. The modern system is in fact a form of protracted interview, covering a period sufficiently long to provide a real basis for assessment and to eliminate some at least of the hazards of the lucky hit and the unlucky miss.

New entrants to Branches A and B are given, wherever possible, periods of post-entry training. For both branches there are lectures, interspersed with visits and practical demonstrations, on the functions, organisation and procedure of the Foreign Service and on its place in the general scheme of government. Reference has been made to the arrangements which exist for training junior Branch A officers in social and economic questions. Branch B entrants, after the introductory course of lectures, are usually assigned to departments of the Foreign Office in order to study the work at home, and may also be sent abroad to selected training posts for practical work in the consular, commercial and Information sections of these posts. While attached to departments of the Office they also study foreign languages, economics and book-keeping on a part-time basis. Branch C entrants go through a 'training pool' in the Foreign Office before being sent abroad.

In addition to the general forms of training through which all new entrants to Branches A and B must normally pass, special training is given to selected members of both these branches in the harder languages—mainly Slavonic and Asiatic, but including also modern Greek and Hungarian. Such people are expected not only to learn one of these languages, but also to acquire a good knowledge of the general background—political, historical, geographical and economic—of the area in which it is spoken. As experts in one or other of the hard languages, they may be called upon to spend a large part of their careers in the country or countries where their

language is used. But, though specialising in this way, they remain liable to be employed, like other members of the Service, in other parts of the world as well. As far as possible language specialists are appointed away from their language area at regular and reasonably frequent intervals.

There are also various forms of official encouragement for the spare-time learning of languages generally. Evening classes are held in the Foreign Office at home; and tuition fees, within reasonable limits, are paid abroad. Subject to various conditions, special allowances of varying amount are payable to members of the Foreign Service who are certified by the Civil Service Commission to have passed examinations in the official languages of the countries in which they are currently serving. These allowances are payable only for as long as the officer concerned serves in the country where the language is spoken. For Branch A, allowances are on three scales according to proficiency, and are payable for the more difficult languages only, i.e., for languages not belonging to the Romance and Germanic groups. For Branches B, C and D, the scheme of allowances is different in some respects and applies to the easier languages also, though knowledge of the harder ones is more highly rewarded. Hard-language allowances for the senior branch are not a recent innovation; they existed long before 1943. But the examination system used to be a good deal more haphazard, and the allowances for the higher standards of proficiency are new. In a later chapter something will be said more generally about linguistic proficiency as a part of the equipment that a Foreign Service officer needs; but here we are concerned only with the general scheme of training and official encouragement.

Apart from these forms of initial training, various facilities are provided for officers who have been abroad for long periods to refresh their knowledge of developments in the United Kingdom. Refresher courses, consisting of lectures and tours designed to show the workings of industry, agriculture, the social services, local government, and so on, are arranged whenever possible for members of the Service who come home on duty, leave or transfer.

All members of the Foreign Service who are liable to be appointed abroad in a representative capacity may find themselves called upon to make speeches in public. Most heads of diplomatic missions have to do so often; and so do the heads of most consular posts, particularly those in the United States. Nowadays, moreover, it not infrequently happens that such speeches are broadcast, and the speaker may even be televised. To most Englishmen this sort of thing does not come easily, and for many members of the

Service the art of oratory is one which has to be consciously, and often painfully acquired. For the benefit of such people, short courses in public speaking are arranged by the Foreign Office twice a year, under a qualified instructor.

## CHAPTER V

### *Conditions of Service*

ONCE the new entrant has passed successfully through these preliminary and probationary stages, he or she becomes a fully-established working member of the organisation. The conditions of service, though generally related to those of Home Civil Servants, reflect the fact that the Foreign Service is a separate and self-contained institution with many requirements and problems of its own. There are in fact considerable differences in such important matters as pay, pensions, overtime work and the rules governing the employment of women. The conditions are fully set out in the Foreign Service Regulations, a voluminous compendium of rules, some of which are applicable to the Service as a whole while others relate to its individual branches. Only the more important of them need be mentioned here.

The period of service is usually to the age of sixty, though it may be extended a few years beyond that age. An officer above Grade 9 of Branch A or Grade 5 of Branch B is not normally entitled to retire on pension before reaching the age of sixty; at or below these levels he may retire voluntarily after reaching fifty without losing his title to a pension at sixty (calculated, of course, on the basis of his actual service). If the reason of his retirement is ill-health, a pension calculated according to length of service is paid. Compulsory retirement (in the interests of Service efficiency, but not by way of disciplinary sanction) before the age of sixty and on a reduced pension is also a possibility, in the circumstances described on page 75 above, where an officer is found to be unsuited for further employment. Service at certain scheduled posts where conditions of work, for climatic or other reasons, are exceptionally arduous, reduces the age at which an officer may retire on pension by three months for each year served, down to a minimum of fifty-five. It counts, too, as time and a half for the purpose of reckoning service on which a pension is paid at the moment of retirement. Normal pensions are calculated on a basis of one-eightieth of the average salary for the last three years of service multiplied by the number of completed years (including additions for service at scheduled posts) up to a maximum of forty-eightieths. If an officer serves after the age of sixty, or if, owing to service at scheduled posts, his retirement age has been reduced, he may earn additional pension up to

a maximum of forty-five eightieths. Pensions for widows, orphans and dependants are on a contributory basis. Contributions may take the form of regular annual deductions of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of salary; or a reduction (by approximately one-third) of the lump sum payment which is made to an officer on retirement; or a reduction by the same amount of the gratuity payable to his legal personal representative if he dies before reaching the age of retirement. The lump sum is normally equivalent to three times the annual pension; the gratuity, to between one and one and a half times the officer's annual salary at the time of death.

Working hours in the Service are not fixed according to an unalterable and uniform plan. Abroad, overtime is not paid to the staff of any branch or grade; at home it is paid only to those below Grade 6 of Branch A. All ranks employed in the Foreign Service overseas, and all the higher ranks at home, are in fact regarded as being on active service in much the same sense as members of the Armed Forces are; and they are expected to tackle whatever work there is to be done without regard for fixed hours or overtime.

Annual leave varies from three weeks for the most junior staff in the Service to eight weeks for the most senior staff serving abroad. At a number of posts (and among these, at present, are included all posts behind the Iron Curtain, for reasons which need no explaining) additional leave is granted: there are fixed additions of fourteen days a year, up to an accumulated maximum of twenty-eight days, but only when the officer is returning to the same specially-classified post or going to another. Leave, other than sick-leave, may be taken either abroad or at home, and may be saved up for more than a year by those serving abroad.

Pay consists of a basic salary --on a scale uniform throughout the Service and depending on branch, grade within the branch, and seniority within the grade --and abroad, additionally, of a foreign allowance which is intended, broadly speaking, to level out the enormous variations throughout the world of the cost of living (that is, the basic cost of living as affected by local 'representational' requirements). Rent allowances are also paid abroad where accommodation is not provided free, as it usually is in the few posts which comprise a residential compound as well as offices. A home service allowance is granted to an officer working at the Foreign Office after service abroad, for the reasons explained more fully on page 76 above, in order to enable him to cope with the problems arising out of a short-term appointment in London. Medical and dental expenses abroad are refunded to the extent to which the treatment received would have been free under the National Health Service in the United Kingdom. On first appointment abroad an

officer receives an outfit allowance. On subsequent transfers, including those to and from the United Kingdom, a transfer grant is paid. The cost of travelling on government business is, of course, an official charge. The allowances granted for proficiency in foreign languages have already been described above. There is constant adjustment of foreign allowances and rent allowances abroad in accordance with the fluctuation of local costs: it is made on the basis of periodic routine reports from each post—in most countries there is an official cost-of-living index, and various other cross-checks are resorted to—and on the recommendations of the Foreign Service Inspectors whose duty it is to visit all the principal posts abroad in rotation. Thus an officer who has no private means (and nowadays only a very few members of the Service have) is never seriously exposed to hardship resulting from the vagaries of local rates of exchange, sudden rises in the cost of living and the like.

The employment of women in the higher branches of the Service gives rise to certain rather serious complications, and therefore calls here for something more than a mere statement that they are so employed. They are in fact now eligible for recruitment into all branches of the Foreign Service except Branch D (the chancery servants and messengers—whose duties may, on occasion, include the forcible ejection of intruders). Much controversy and enquiry by special committees preceded this innovation. The controversy did not, in the main, turn upon the question of intrinsic intellectual capacity; most British people nowadays, inside as well as outside the Service, are agreed that women are as well equipped as men for all or nearly all forms of Foreign Service work (though there are some people of both sexes who still resolutely maintain that organising ability and judgment, which are so necessary in the higher grades, are to be found chiefly in the male). And if equality of capacity be admitted, then the opening of a career in Branch A of the Service to women can obviously be justified and advocated by (amongst other things) the argument that it must raise the standard of competence by enlarging the field of choice. Some of the difficulties which retarded the adoption of this measure are still, however, difficulties unsolved. They are purely practical and unrelated to the theoretical question of intrinsic capacity. And they are due mainly to the fact that the average woman in the Service, no less than the average man, will wish to marry. If she loses her British nationality by marrying a foreigner—and it must be remembered that she will normally spend the greater part of her career abroad—it is obvious enough that she cannot continue to serve the Crown. But that is not the main difficulty, which exists even if she marries a British subject.

For the male officer marriage presents no Service problem. Convention allows that his wife need have no profession of her own. Moreover she probably *should* have none, seeing that in the higher grades of the Service she will have an important social rôle to play which is likely to keep her fully employed. Indeed it is very nearly true to say that she *can* properly have none; since, quite apart from the question of social demands on her time, there are extremely few professions the following of which would not conflict in some degree with the interests of the Service. The fact is that the people who form a diplomatic mission or consular establishment in a foreign country, including the wives and dependants of the working staff, belong to it one and all; and the organisation as a whole has what might almost be called the quality of a 'corporate official guest'. It is there to do a recognised official job, and to do nothing but that job. The bounds of its activities, both representational and other, are strictly set by convention and by tradition; and it must on no account overstep these limits, for to do so would be to abuse the privileged position which it enjoys by courtesy of the nation that is its host.

But the converse of all this—the hypothetical case of the husband of a woman Foreign Service Officer abroad—obviously presents difficulties which cannot be solved by his confining himself to being a husband. There is indeed, in almost all cases, no work legitimately open to him; but if he has none he becomes, for that very reason and because he is a man, a social and professional liability. Particularly is this so at the highest Service levels, since the idea of an unemployed 'husband of Her Excellency' hovering somewhere in the domestic background is still not easily acceptable. It may be that in some future age the idea will cease to be unorthodox, and will be generally accepted as a corollary of the conception of complete equality between the sexes. But the Service cannot afford to anticipate such changes of sentiment.

For these and other reasons the rule is that when a woman officer marries she must retire from the Service. But this rule does not really solve the problem. For her, it means that unless she is content to remain celibate she is not going to enjoy the same professional advantages as her male colleagues who need not—a lifelong career, that is, with the chance of attaining high rank and with a pension at the end of it. For the Service itself, it means at least the intrusion of an element of the unpredictable in all operations relating to long-term administrative and staff planning.

There is another and more general difficulty, for which the celibacy rule provides no solution, about the employment of women in the administrative branch of the Foreign Service. It is not enough



in practice that our own country and a fair number of others should hold enlightened or advanced views on the intrinsic equality of the sexes in point of intellectual capacity. So long as there are countries which regard women as less worthy than men of being taken seriously in professional matters—and there are still a good number of these—the principle of full mobility and interchangeability must go by the board so far as women are concerned. John Doe can be posted to any part of the world; Mary Roe can be posted to certain parts of it only. This is administratively awkward. It could no doubt be urged that we ought to combat surviving foreign prejudices by the force of our own example—in other words, that we should teach the backward countries to be less backward by appointing women diplomatists and consular officers for service there until they 'learn better'. But even if it were true that we could, in the long term, impose our own ideas by this deliberate educational method, we certainly could not do so without in some degree hampering the conduct of British diplomatic relations. This is but one more example of the fact that the Foreign Service has to take the world as it finds it, and must leave the more daring innovations to other institutions less practically vulnerable.

The women members of the administrative branch of the Foreign Service are rendering most valuable service at home and abroad, and there are those among them who can aspire to very high posts if they serve a full career. But the wastage is very heavy. Of the eighteen women who have been admitted to Branch A, seven have resigned on marriage.

In any working institution the conditions of service are of two main kinds: obligations and rewards. So far we have been considering chiefly the second kind. Mention has already also been made of the border-line condition that whereas office hours in the Foreign Service abroad are not immutably fixed, its members as a whole are expected to work very hard indeed whenever the need arises, without overtime pay or thought for their own convenience. Apart from this, practically all the conditions that fall under the head of obligations flow naturally from the special character of official employment in the international field. The essence of the matter is that when abroad the Foreign Service officer, whatever his rank and grade may be, has in some degree the quality of a representative and must conduct himself accordingly. Hence many attitudes and actions that are permissible for others in government employ at home are not permissible for him, particularly if he is the head of a mission or well on the way to becoming one. The national sentiments, tastes and prejudices of foreign peoples must always be taken into account in determining what he may and may not do at a

given post; for, as stated at the beginning of this book, diplomacy cannot attempt to impose any one purely national pattern of life on the international environment in which it functions. It does indeed seek to make known and appreciated its own national pattern in the larger things; but never by the sort of personal non-conformity that might give offence.

In a good many countries, for instance, divorce is much more uncompromisingly disapproved than it is with us. The man (or woman) who has been divorced—whether or not the blame was legally placed on the other partner—is in such countries under a definite social handicap; indeed until quite recently there were countries where the royal court would not receive him at all. The handicap is not merely his own; it is the Service's also. On the chequerboard of transfers and promotions he becomes a piece more difficult to move, and his usefulness may be impaired. This is an example of the larger things in which conformity is generally required. Clothes provide an illustration of the smaller ones. In some parts of the world which are (for us) extremely hot, the authorities dislike any suggestion that their country is tropical, since for some obscure reason this word connotes for them a status of international inferiority. It is a mere prejudice, and a tiresome one; but it has to be taken into account for all that. In such countries the British diplomatist must swelter through official receptions and public functions in the dark clothes that he would wear in London, because it would give offence if he wore 'whites'. This is a condition of service which is not mentioned in the bulky collection of Foreign Service Regulations; but it is a condition none the less, for the simple reason that the serving officer must always consider national prejudices.

It has been said above that the lives of all the members of a diplomatic mission abroad are affected by its quality of a 'corporate official guest'. As individuals they may not, even if they had the time, engage in any activities that would be out of keeping with this quality. Through belonging to the mission they enjoy many privileges not enjoyed by the people among whom they live: duty-free importation (in most countries) of their personal belongings and requirements; exemption from most forms of local taxation; even immunity—by virtue of an unwritten convention which is honoured by all civilised states—from arrest and court proceedings for legal offences that they may unwittingly commit. Such special privileges derive from the mission's status; and they carry with them special obligations, some entirely obvious, others perhaps rather less so. It will be immediately evident, for instance, that a diplomatist must not engage in any form of commercial activity, since if he did so he

would be exploiting his privileged status for ends other than those it was granted for. But equally in the management of his investments and private fortune—if he has any—he must scrupulously avoid two things: in the first place he must, of course, steer clear of all financial speculation based on information he acquires in his official position; but he must also see to it that he is not even under the mere suspicion of such speculation. And this means in practice that he must be a thoroughly conservative investor, since in no other way can suspicion be wholly allayed. In all such matters the appearance is nearly as important as the reality, for a mere suspicion aroused by misinterpreted facts can do much harm to the interests of the Service.

No less obvious, perhaps, is the fact that a diplomatist must ever be careful to avoid showing his personal bias and predilections in regard to the party politics of his own country, whether by approval or disapproval. Though the government that he serves may on occasion constitute an all-party coalition, it is far more often representative of a simple party majority. Party majorities change, and he goes on—with a reputation, moreover, which accompanies him wherever he goes, for the ‘diplomatic grape-vine’ is very efficient. Hence if he is to serve his country as it should be served he must at all times keep his own political views strictly to himself. It is not enough that he should scrupulously avoid—as he certainly will if he has any sense of professional honour—being actually influenced by these views in his official actions. Here again, the semblance is important as well as the reality: he must not even reveal what his views are, because to do so might encourage the belief that he *could* be so influenced. He may, of course, hold such strong and radical opinions that a moment comes when the carrying out of his instructions appears to him quite incompatible with the dictates of his private political conscience. In that case he is unfortunate; for probably the only proper course for him is to resign. In general, however, British foreign policies are notoriously but little affected by changes in the internal political scene, and consequently the average officer of the British Foreign Service is not very likely to be faced with this painful dilemma.

There are similar obligations in lesser fields unconnected with politics, commerce and finance. A diplomatist living in a foreign country will incidentally see many small happenings that a foreign newspaper correspondent also sees—many little incidents that are more or less amusing and go to make up the country’s ‘local colour’. The journalist may write as much about these small but revealing incidents as he dares to do; and his public, eager for relief from the oppressive seriousness of foreign affairs, will lap it up.

The diplomatist, however, must contrive to be looking the other way at the critical moment, for he is an official guest and has the corresponding social obligations. The fact is that the people of most countries are sensitive to foreign comment in inverse proportion to its real importance. Show them up publicly as defaulters on a foreign loan, or even as violators of an international treaty, and they will probably remain cool; call attention to minor absurdities and hitches in one of their public ceremonies, and they will almost certainly get extremely hot. The diplomatist, even after he retires, can never write his reminiscences with complete candour, and for this reason he usually gives in print the impression of being a very dull dog. In reality he is merely behaving with the discretion incumbent on any man who has enjoyed hospitality. Every member of the Foreign Service is in point of fact required at the outset of his career to sign the document of undertakings prescribed in the Official Secrets Act; and for the rest of his life he can be prosecuted for violating any of its provisions, which are couched in wide terms. But he is in any case restrained, if he has a proper sense of the obligations flowing from his position, by the realisation that if ever he were indiscreet, even in a seemingly quite trivial matter, he would risk bringing down resentment on his Service as a whole.

There is no need to dilate here on the more obvious obligation to preserve security in really important matters of state. Suffice it to say that quite a large part of the Foreign Service Regulations is devoted to the general and particular aspects of an officer's duties under this head. Security is broadly speaking of two kinds, material and personal. The first requires the competent manipulation of an elaborate physical apparatus and the observance of many routine safeguards in the handling of official documents; the second, an attitude of mind that can indeed be fostered up to a certain point by written rules, but must always in the last analysis depend largely on the officer's imaginative sense of responsibility.

Most of the obligations of service described so far are part of the general convention of diplomatic life as observed by all civilised powers, but one or two restrictions are imposed on members of the British Foreign Service that are not common to diplomatists as a whole. There is, for example, a standing regulation that foreign decorations may not be accepted save in certain very rare circumstances that need not be defined here. Queen Elizabeth the First is said to have exclaimed, in a moment of annoyance at seeing one of her representatives wearing a number of foreign orders, 'My dogs shall wear no other collar than mine own!'; and the rule has been observed, more or less strictly, ever since. No doubt it is fundamentally and theoretically a good one: seeing that a diplomatist's

loyalty must be rigorously single, it is fitting that he should avoid even the most superficial suggestion of its being shared. Medal-hunting, incidentally, is one of the recognised failings of a certain type of emissary; and the average British diplomatist, well aware of this, has certainly no wish to compete with those of his foreign colleagues who positively clank with assorted hardware at all official ceremonies. The rule which makes him a non-competitor does however tend to be resented abroad as harshly and offensively puritanical, and he himself often gets the backlash of this resentment. Foreign potentates are apt to contend that they cannot be bound by any regulations other than their own in the matter of decorations; and occasionally they try to rush the fence, with most embarrassing results.



PART THREE

*Life and Work  
at Foreign Service Establishments*





## CHAPTER VI

### *Diplomatic Missions to Foreign Countries*

IT would be convenient if at this point in the account of the Foreign Service a chapter could be included under some such simple heading as 'A Typical Day in the Life of a British Diplomatist'. It would be convenient; but it is unfortunately impossible, for there is no such thing. The difficulty of describing diplomatic life is caused by that almost infinite diversity in which its chief attraction lies—a diversity of function, of place and of occasion. Obviously the life of a Third Secretary will differ in many important ways from that of the Ambassador under whom he serves—though it would be quite wrong to suppose that the one is necessarily more interesting and enjoyable than the other. Again, whatever may be the diplomatist's rank and grade he will find himself called upon to do widely different jobs according as he may be posted to Asunción or to Oslo, to Kabul or to Rome, to Rangoon or to Washington; and here too it is perhaps worth emphasising that for the intelligent diplomatist the degree of interest and enjoyment depends very little on whether the post be large or small, since there is no country that does not provide an inexhaustible and highly repaying field for study. Finally, the life led at any post is constantly varied by the changing pattern of external conditions, political and other. It is not merely that there are smooth patches and rough patches: there are many kinds of each. The rough ones are not caused only by political tension and hostility: they may be the result of good relations as well as of bad. The final stages of a friendly conference, or of the conclusion of a comprehensive treaty of amity, are apt to impose quite as heavy a strain of sheer overwork on a diplomatic mission as any crisis due to political cross-purposes and ill-feeling; and consequently in these days of ever-increasing interdependence between nations the calm and relatively dull periods seldom last long.

Nevertheless certain generalisations are possible. One can, for instance, say with complete truth that even the most energetic candidate for a Foreign Service career need not be afraid nowadays of ever having too little to do. The popular belief that the diplomatist is an idle fellow dies exceedingly hard, and it is worth considering why this should be. No doubt one of the reasons is that the notion which one man has of another man's job is almost always out of

date if he does not actually see him at it. Books in general, and particularly the threadbare conventions of second-rate fiction, are enough in themselves to ensure a considerable time-lag. If the popular mental picture of a British army officer is no longer that of a man in scarlet brandishing a sword, the reason is mainly that the contemporary British Army is very much in evidence; and even this does not altogether destroy belief in the existence of such wholly obsolete or purely mythical Army types as the Colonel Blimp invented by a political cartoonist between the wars.

The diplomatist for his part is never much in evidence except when he is performing the most apparently idle of all his manifold functions. He is often caught by the press photographer enjoying an excellent public dinner. He is not on view when, hours later, he is still up and recording with scrupulous care the political views of his neighbours at table, the influential mayor of Y and the perspicacious governor-general of Z. Hence it comes about that while Ouïda no longer has much influence on the popular notion of Army life, the present-day diplomatist still suffers from the imaginative excursions of writers even earlier in date and even more comprehensively misinformed. He also suffers from the delayed action of more or less true notions about the diplomatic life of fifty and more years ago, which was normally very easy-going. And finally he is to some extent the victim of his own quite praiseworthy outlook and habits. He was brought up on Talleyrand's famous words of advice, '*N'ayez pas de zèle*', and he rightly interprets this as meaning that he would not be doing his job properly if he did not usually appear calm, unhurried and happy to be where he is. Even in those countries that are alleged to admire the hustling business executive he must refrain from seeming to be one, for his rôle is essentially that of an honoured guest. At a moment of exceptionally grave crisis he may indeed think it politic to look almost as worried as he feels; but for the most part he must not look worried at all. Nor, if he is wise and conscientious, will he wish to appear either quite as well-informed or quite as quick-witted as he actually is; for people seldom open out in conversation when they are made to feel that they are confronted with profound knowledge or intellectual pre-eminence. So long as he can get through his real work with inconspicuous efficiency, and thus earn the respect of those few with whom he actually does business, he would rather the rest of the world thought him not

<sup>1</sup> This remark is often quoted as: '*Surtout pas trop de zèle*'; but the version given in the text is one for which there is good authority. It is noteworthy that Talleyrand, when recommending the staff of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to his successor, praised them for having become, under his tuition, '*nullement zélés*.'

serious enough than too serious. It is small wonder, in all these circumstances, that he should seldom be credited with working as hard as in fact he does. He would like to be, for that is only human; but in his heart of hearts he knows that he would be of less value if he were.

As we have said, the British diplomatic official does not suffer much from the tyranny of unalterably-fixed working hours. The lower his grade in the hierarchy, of course, the more he is expected to order his life according to a definite routine. An archivist, for instance, must necessarily spend more time in the office building than his ambassador does, and spend it on a more regular pattern, since his work is exclusively clerical: he handles incoming and outgoing correspondence, entering and summarising its contents on the appropriate files and ordering the mechanical processes of what is known as 'the paper work'. And, more generally, a diplomatic mission must always be in state of accessibility both to the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to communications from the Foreign Office at home; it must, in fact, always be prepared to cope with urgent problems as they arise. But it is nevertheless true to say that within these necessary limitations the sound principle is followed in the Foreign Service of working hard when there is work to be done and not pretending to work when there is not. During a crisis every member of a mission is expected, as a matter of course, to labour all day and far into the night at high pressure and for as long as the crisis lasts --which may be for months at a stretch. And not even the most junior member of the staff (when serving abroad) is paid for overtime. He is one of the crew of a ship in a storm; and the only thing that matters is that the storm should be successfully ridden out. When on the other hand there is a lull he is allowed to take full advantage of it within the necessary limitations mentioned above. The result is a highly-developed corporate spirit. The cypher officer may grumble impersonally when for a week on end he is got up in the small hours to handle urgent telegrams. So-- though with more care to do it under his breath--may the ambassador, roused in his turn. But there is never any question of jibbing or of going slow. Every member of the staff of a mission is conscious of belonging to a working team with a nationally essential job to do.

There is an ideal working day at a diplomatic mission abroad—a day, that is, during which all the current work that has to be done can be fitted into more or less normal office hours and coped with in such a way as to leave no loose ends. Each incoming communication from London, telegraphic or other, is entered in the registry, put up to the officer within whose province it lies, and dealt with by him (under the general supervision of the head of the mission) as its contents require. If it asks questions, he answers

them; if it prescribes action in the shape of negotiations with the local authorities, he takes such action, records the result in a minute which he circulates to those of his colleagues who are concerned, and reports it to the Foreign Office if need be. If he takes some action without specific instructions from London and at the instance of the local authorities, or has some interesting conversation with them or with a foreign diplomatic colleague, he follows more or less the same procedure. If he feels called upon to compose some general report on an incident or trend which he has observed, he writes it, gets it passed by his chief and the other people concerned, and sends it down for despatch. In each case his report is duly sent off by telegraph or other means and finally entered in the registry as 'action completed'. By six or seven o'clock in the evening the current work of the mission is all disposed of, leaving nothing but a completed record in the shape of the file copies and minutes locked up in the registry presses. The decks are cleared for the morrow.

This, we repeat, is the ideal working day. It need scarcely be said that it never dawns. Diplomatic business is much too tangled and far-ramifying to permit of such regularity, punctuality and neatness in its despatch. For much of it, even periods of time commensurate with the 'days' in the first chapter of Genesis are apt to seem too brief. And even in the comparatively short-term items of business there are usually delays before the archivist can write *finis* to a particular operation. Questions cannot be answered at once because the British or foreign expert who knows the answer is sick, or on leave, or travelling in the provinces. Interviews with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his assistants take time to arrange and are inconclusive in their results. (His Excellency must think it over or consult his Cabinet colleagues, and will give an answer later.) Files are wanted simultaneously by several officers in a mission for different purposes, and each has to wait his turn. Sometimes papers are temporarily mislaid, though an elaborate system of checking is used in order to reduce this danger as far as possible. The action taken by each senior officer of the mission is liable to impinge upon, and influence to some extent, the action of every other; hence many forms of co-ordination, from telephone calls to full-dress staff conferences, are needed to prevent a crossing of the wires. An elaborately-dovetailed programme of action devised by the Head of Chancery may come to grief because the Ambassador has had to rush off at short notice to attend the funeral of the Vice-President of the Senate, or is closeted with that staunch but garrulous friend of Great Britain, the old Duke of So-and-So. At the smaller and more distant missions, where the diplomatic bags come in and go out once a week or once a fortnight in charge of a Queen's

Messenger, the main rhythm of activity is marked by these arrivals and departures, and the tempo works up regularly towards *agitato* on 'bag night'—not indeed because the staff have been dilatory between the peaks, but simply because nobody is so inhuman as to be quite immune from postal fevers, and because a heroic rush to report last-minute news by bag may save quite a lot of telegraphic expense.

Nevertheless the ideal working day here described remains an ideal at the back of everybody's mind, and great efforts are made to approximate to it as far as circumstances allow. The junior staff usually get to their desks rather earlier in the morning than their seniors because theirs is largely the preparatory work of opening, entering and distributing correspondence which will then be dealt with by others. The senior staff, though they start later, usually have a longer working day, for in addition to office tasks they have social and representational duties which may last till all hours of the night and will often have to be followed by the making of rough records of conversations while the memory is still fresh. With a diplomatic corps of anything up to sixty foreign missions, it is seldom that there is not at least one cocktail-party to be attended at six or seven o'clock in the evening, and often enough this is followed by a dinner-party.

Almost all diplomatists, British and foreign, deplore the tyranny of the cocktail-party as a diplomatic institution, yet almost all of them feel obliged both to give and to attend such parties. The fact is that, though tiring and bad for the digestion, they have their uses. They are a form of clearing-house or exchange and mart for political rumours—rumours which, indeed, frequently turn out to be unfounded or wildly distorted, but are sometimes true and really interesting. And they provide, by gathering a great number of people together under one roof, the means of dealing quickly and informally with a lot of minor business for which the day would otherwise be too short. The opinion of a foreign diplomatic colleague can be sought on some small but confusing point of local constitutional procedure which he is known to have studied deeply. In return, he can probably be told some item of news which is worth knowing and has not already come to the knowledge of his mission. The private secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs is seen hovering in a corner, and can be asked in a not too formal way when His Excellency's long-promised official reply about some pending matter may be expected. A Cabinet minister other than the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who could not be approached officially (for it is one of the rules of the game that all official dealings must be canalised through the foreign ministry) can be discreetly sounded

about some negotiation in which he is alleged to be the stumbling-block. Polite enquiries can be made, which would otherwise entail a separate call at the other end of the town, about the health of a foreign colleague known to be ailing. And so on and so forth.

But to return to the working day at the office: there is no immutable scheme of working hours, and the arrangement in force will depend not only on the pressure of business at a given moment, but also on the climate of the post and the habits of the country. Where the middle hours of the day are excessively hot it is usual to start work very early in the morning and go on in the evening after a long break. The visiting British traveller, bent on telling the Ambassador personally what he thinks of the local customs officials or of the mission's failure to push the sale of Harris tweeds, may be shocked to learn that at two o'clock in the afternoon His Excellency is asleep; but the mission is merely adapting itself to the customs of the country. Every government office will be firmly closed at that hour, and it would be as unreasonable to try to transact business with the Minister for Foreign Affairs before the temperature begins to go down at four o'clock as it would for a foreign diplomatist in London to seek an interview with the Foreign Secretary at 3 A.M. In temperate climates, however, it is usual for the main Chancery offices to be open by about half past nine in the morning and for work to continue till about six o'clock in the evening with a short break for luncheon. Urgent telegrams, of course, are dealt with at all hours of the day and night, and the necessary skeleton staff is permanently available at short notice for handling them. British business men, and outside observers generally, are apt to forget that much work is done at diplomatic missions, as at Banks, during hours when they are not open to the public.

The character of the office work naturally varies greatly from post to post. In some countries which are both friendly and governmentally well-organised a great deal of business can be done by personal interviews and even by telephone calls, with a corresponding reduction of paper work. Each of the senior members of the diplomatic mission will have a number of personal friends in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who can be relied upon to deal sensibly and honestly with his problems, reporting what he has said without distortion and generally acting as dependable channels for the conduct of business where they themselves cannot dispose of it. In other countries which are less friendly or less well organised it is impossible to rely so much on personal contacts and the spoken word; almost everything has to be set down officially on paper, to prevent either wilful distortion or the misunderstandings caused by inefficiency. Much, again, will depend on the personal character and official

influence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs: he may be a genial person who prefers to do business over cigars and coffee and is allowed much latitude by his Prime Minister and Cabinet colleagues; he may, on the contrary, be quite well-disposed but a believer in the formal written word, or so closely supervised that he can do hardly anything on his own initiative.

All these things will inevitably influence the character of the mission's work. But it must be added that even in the most favourable circumstances there is bound to be a great volume of paper. Full records must be kept of all transactions both large and small, not only because at any given moment several members of a mission will be more or less directly interested in the questions which are being handled by each one of them, but also because the mission staff seldom remains unchanged for long and it is essential that a newcomer should be able to see from the files exactly what has been done and still remains to do. The mission's work must also be comprehensible, at every stage and on paper, to authorised investigators from outside such as Foreign Office Inspectors. The criticism commonly made by business men, that they manage to get through their work with much less paper and red tape, is true but beside the point. A business firm has a free hand to act as it likes within the limits imposed by its shareholders, who do not as a rule claim wide powers of control and interference; and its business is private business, not the nation's. A diplomatic mission, on the other hand, is ultimately responsible for all its actions to a formidable chain of higher authorities ending in Parliament itself.

Hence the very elaborate system of minuting and filing on which the Foreign Office insists. Hence also the great importance of the mission's archivist in the general scheme of things; for although ideally speaking everything should be 'down on paper' and easily traceable—filed and indexed, that is, with ample cross-references—the actual manipulation of so much paper is no easy task. A good archivist will have a very capacious memory for detail as well as being skilled in those techniques that are intended to make long memories as far as possible unnecessary. When submitting a paper on some apparently fresh problem, he will often attach a file that has lain buried for years but has an important bearing on it. It may be that a consul reports having had trouble with a new provincial governor who is inclined to harry resident British subjects. Nothing seems to be known of him, and as the country is generally friendly his motives appear inexplicable. But the archivist remembers that many years ago this same governor, then an obscure lieutenant in the gendarmerie, was accused of extortion and general malpractices in another remote province, and was unconvincingly exonerated by a local court

of enquiry through the exertions of his well-connected wife. The archivist was serving elsewhere at the time, but he knows his innumerable files inside out. The earlier paper that he unearths is of the greatest value to the Ambassador when he goes to the Minister for Foreign Affairs with his complaint and demand for redress.

Although in recent years the scope of every diplomatic mission's activities has increased enormously by reason of the growing importance of new and technical subjects, economic and other, it is still true to say that at the average mission political questions form the hard core of the work; and those unspecialised members of the staff who deal with political questions are thus in a sense the backbone of the mission. They form the Chancery and are the organisers and synthetisers of the work as a whole; and the specialists—the experts in economic, military and labour questions, the Information Officers, and so on—though they may be of high rank and doing jobs of vital importance, are peripheral. The head of the mission is responsible for every aspect of its work, and is of course the king pin. Every member of the staff is directly under his orders (though some of the experts may be authorised, as a matter of convenience, to correspond independently with Departments at home other than the Foreign Office). He is the sun of his own planetary system. But he must have time to ponder on the larger matters, and cannot be constantly occupied with detailed questions of organisation. His second-in-command—a Counsellor at most of the smaller posts, an officer with the personal rank of Minister at the larger ones—does not occupy himself much with these details either, for his main duty is to help his chief in thinking out the wider problems and to take charge of the mission when he is away. The man on whom these heavy organisational duties chiefly fall is the Head of Chancery, for the chancery of a mission is its central office and main working part.

The Head of Chancery is usually a First Secretary. In point of hierarchical status, therefore, he is only about half-way up the tree and in the middle years of his own career. He is often outranked by many of the 'peripheral' specialists, but his central position makes him a very important person, and indeed the general efficiency of the mission turns largely on him. The variety of his work will depend to some extent on the size of the mission, but is always great. Where the mission is large he will be assisted by an Administrative Officer, but at the smaller posts he will have no such assistant and must cope more or less unaided with innumerable problems relating not only to the general organisation, distribution and co-ordination of the office work, but also to matters of discipline and welfare. Though not a universal expert—for of course there can be no such



thing nowadays—he will see and digest most of the minutes and reports of the specialised members of the staff, and will have a general responsibility for ensuring that the activities of each of them fit properly into the work of the mission as a whole, without overlapping and also without gaps and contradictions. This in itself calls for a good deal of tact in view of his relatively junior rank. He will probably draft some of the main political reports himself, and will certainly be expected to 'vet' those drafted by his subordinates in the Chancery—the second and third secretaries who, like him, are more or less unspecialised.

Where there is no Administrative Officer, the Head of Chancery will, in addition to all this, have to take a direct personal hand in arrangements for the welfare of the staff—their accommodation, their leave, their transport, their health, and a hundred other matters relating to their lives as individuals. If the mission has its own residential compound he will have to supervise such practical things as the allocation and upkeep of the houses, and even the proper maintenance of the water supply and drainage system. When the mission holds a *gyalkhana* or some other show in aid of a British charity, or gives a children's party at Christmas, he will be immersed in all the arrangements. He must know which members of the staff are liable to get on the nerves of which other members, and must exercise a great deal of tact and sagacity in smoothing out personal antipathies. He is, in short—and particularly at the smaller posts—a jack-of-all-trades as well as a political diplomat. The Head of Chancery is thus always a busy man and sometimes a harassed one. But if he contrives to get through his work and make a success of it, he will know that he is well on the way to the top of the tree and will be familiar with all its branches when he gets there.

Thus far we have been attempting to depict the political backbone of the mission—the Chancery and the Registry—by describing its two main vertebrae, the Head of Chancery and the (Chief) Archivist. The latter is of course subordinate to the former; but each in his own way is a chieftain under the general direction of the head of the mission, a pivotal point in the mechanism. If the Archivist is senior and really competent he will be of great help to the Head of Chancery in smoothing out the sort of domestic problems which invariably arise in a small and self-contained community, and which, in a diplomatic mission as anywhere else, consume much valuable time. The Counsellor, as will be seen, stands rather aside, though senior to the Head of Chancery, since he is, as his title implies, an adviser to the Ambassador (or Minister, if the mission is a Legation) and deputises for him when necessary. Directly below the Head of Chancery, and part of the main backbone, are second

and third secretaries, chiefly though not necessarily junior members of Branch A. They are not specialists in the true sense; but each will probably be to some extent specialised in one or more aspects of the political work. One will be an expert in the country's colonial dependencies, if there are any; another, in its attitude towards, and dealings with, the United Nations; a third, in its constitution and political party system; and so on. Each will help his seniors when his speciality is the subject of negotiation, and will initiate—that is, write the first drafts for—notes, despatches and other forms of correspondence about it. He may even deal with certain minor questions more or less on his own. But in general, being of junior rank and comparatively small experience, he will do these things under direction, submitting his drafts to the Head of Chancery; who in turn will decide whether they should go up higher or be passed by himself and 'sent down' for despatch.

The smaller the post, the less the possibilities of specialisation and the more the junior secretaries will take part in all aspects of its work. This is one of the main reasons why a small post has many compensations—and particularly for the junior grades. It is no doubt pleasant to be the acknowledged specialist in one's own line of country, but on the whole it is more interesting to have a hand in many different things. It is also inevitable that at the smaller posts there should be less tiresome 'paper routine'. The routine in its full rigour is made necessary by problems of co-ordination within a large and complex organisation. The mere act of distributing and dovetailing all the work that has to be done at a major mission is quite an intricate business calling for an elaborate apparatus of minutes, despatch boxes and messengers; and the process implied in the much-ridiculed formula 'Passed to you for necessary action please' becomes an inescapable necessity, though the actual formula is never used. At a minor mission, however, these things can be partly dispensed with. When a junior secretary wants a file he probably goes and gets it for himself out of the registry, which is next door, and at the same time has a useful word about its contents with the archivist (the professional 'remembrancer'). When he is trying to rush a report through for the bag which is due to leave in an hour or two, he can generally find and corner his superior officers—the Head of Chancery and even the Ambassador—without preliminary formality, for they are likely to be far more accessible at a small post than at a large one. The head of a mission and his senior officers are never inaccessible through choice: the contemporary British diplomatist is neither pompous nor a snob. But for obvious practical reasons they cannot avoid being more difficult of approach at posts where the staff is numerous and the hierarchical organisa-

tion correspondingly elaborate. It is roughly the difference between life in a battleship and life in a destroyer.

As for the rival claims of large and small posts in point of general interest, experience suggests that there is little to choose between them. Impressiveness may be a matter of physical size, but interest seldom is. To the scientist a vole is as fascinating an object of study as a lion; and it is the same with foreign countries! Not that the diplomatist's attitude should or can be identical with that commonly attributed to the ordinary scientist: far from being a coldly analytical dissector, he must possess (as no doubt the really great scientists do) the warm qualities of human sympathy and imaginative vision. But objective analysis does for all that play a considerable part in his work; and for such analysis there is no country in the world that offers too small a field.

We come now to the real specialists on the staff. Naturally their number depends on the general importance of the post; and so also, usually, does their seniority. In Washington the list of them is impressive. There is a Minister (Commercial) with two Counsellors, two First Secretaries and one Second Secretary on his own particular staff; a Minister who is also Head of the United Kingdom Treasury and Supply Delegation, with an assistant Counsellor; a Minister (Raw Materials) with no less than four assistant Counsellors; a Financial Counsellor; and an Economic Counsellor. There is the Head of the British Information Service, with two First Secretaries. There are Attachés, many of them with Assistant Attachés, specialising in such diverse subjects as civil aviation, petroleum, shipping, agriculture, food, colonial affairs (ours, that is, with particular reference to American opinion), and telecommunications. There is a Counsellor (Labour) assisted by a First Secretary. There are an Attaché and an Assistant Attaché for Scientific Questions (chiefly, but not exclusively, matters relating to nuclear fission). And even this does not complete the list.

This, of course, is the extreme case, and reflects the enormous volume, importance and complexity of our relations with the United States. At the other end of the scale there are countries where our diplomatic missions are very small indeed and include, apart from Service Attachés (usually shared between a number of small posts), no specialists at all. These are for the most part small countries; but by no means necessarily countries of little importance to ourselves. The size of a British diplomatic mission is in fact governed chiefly by the volume of official business, of all kinds, that it has to cope with; but volume is not the only criterion of importance. A small state may, for example, be the nerve-centre of an influential regional group whose combined weight counts for a great deal in the voting

procedures of the United Nations and in international affairs more generally. Our relations with such a state may consequently be of very considerable moment. But in this case they will be mainly high-level political relations which can be conducted without the help of a horde of technical specialists. It would perhaps be a trifle invidious, despite what has just been said about criteria of importance, to indicate which of all our diplomatic missions lies at the opposite end of the scale from the Washington Embassy in point of mere size. We may however mention one of the very smallest which, though there are factors which obviously put it in a class apart, yet illustrates sufficiently well how unreliable mere size may be as a guide to importance. Our mission to the Holy See consists of a Minister, a First Secretary and an Archivist. It could hardly be smaller; but its importance in the scheme of things is by no means small, being governed by the importance of the Vatican itself as an institution wielding great influence and extremely well-informed.

Most of the specialists mentioned above as forming the technical side of the staff at Washington need no explaining: their titles indicate sufficiently well what they do. At no other post are there so many. Not even in Venezuela, for instance, is there a Petroleum Attaché; though at all posts where oil production is important there is at least one member of the staff who specialises largely in the problems which it creates. But at almost all diplomatic missions throughout the world there are specialists belonging to three major categories: the Service Attachés, Naval, Military and Air; the Commercial Diplomatic Officers; and the Information Officers. The civilians in these categories are paid for by the Foreign Office and most of them belong to the Service as regular career members of it, whereas the Service Attachés are paid for by their own Departments and their attachment to diplomatic missions is merely a passing stage in their careers.

The Service Attachés maintain direct liaison with the armed ~~forces of the~~ country in which they serve, represent or assist their diplomatic chief at parades and other military functions, and advise him on their own subjects. While serving at a diplomatic mission they are just as much a part of it as any other member of the staff, and are as definitely under the orders of its chief; but they have their own separate offices and clerical assistants, and correspond direct with their own home Departments on technical questions. If for instance a Military Attaché is invited to attend the autumn manœuvres of the army, he will probably write a general report about them for enclosure in a despatch from the ambassador to the Foreign Office, but will also correspond direct with the War Office on points of detail.

In the minds of some uninformed or misinformed people—particularly behind the Iron Curtain—Service Attachés, are little more than licensed spies; but this, of course, is a delusion except in so far as one may accept the thesis that all diplomatists are spies. All diplomatists do indeed report to their own governments, as part of their regular duties, whatever they are able to observe of the nature and potentialities of the countries in which they serve; and reports about political dissension, or industrial development, or labour disputes, are liable to be at least as useful to a government contemplating warfare as reports about the state of discipline in an army or the development of a new type of field-gun. It is thus quite arguable that states in potentially hostile relations with each other would do better not to exchange diplomatic emissaries at all; or at any rate should so hedge them about with restrictions and police surveillance as to deprive them of the power of observing anything except the face of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, reducing them to the status of living pillar-boxes for the transmission of official correspondence. But this is to forgo the advantages, for both the parties concerned, of normal diplomacy. To most countries on this side of the Iron Curtain friendship between states is the aim; and friendship without acquaintance is impossible. In such countries the exchange of diplomatic missions is regarded as one of the best means of promoting acquaintance, and the secondment of officers of the armed forces for service with these missions as a welcome development of the general principle. These officers are not necessarily shown everything: most countries, of course, have a certain number of military secrets which are closely guarded and not revealed even to the most privileged guest. But such reservations are part of a well-understood and accepted convention; and within its framework Service Attachés play a rôle, in cultivating personal and official relations and promoting general understanding, which is not merely permissible but extremely valuable. There is a corporate spirit among fighting services everywhere that is at least as well-developed as the corporate spirit among diplomatists. Both need direct and personal contact to exist at all; and both are powerful factors making for peace.

The next main category of specialists consists of the Commercial Diplomatic Officers. A short account of their professional ancestry was given in Chapter IV, but it will be convenient to say a little more at this point by way of amplification. Not till quite late in the nineteenth century was the need for employing commercial specialists at diplomatic missions even faintly recognised. Before that all commercial work had been left to the consular officers, then constituting an entirely separate service which had indeed originally

come into being mainly for the protection and promotion of trade. The work had been well done by the consuls, but had seldom been arduous, since in the nineteenth century and earlier the average British trader prided himself on his self-reliance, and governments had hardly begun to experiment in the control of commerce. But all that was gradually changing. Shortly before the turn of the century, then, a few of the principal diplomatic posts began to have Commercial Attachés, as they were then known. Their numbers gradually increased, but it was not till the end of the first world war, and as a result of the economic difficulties which it had brought upon us, that their importance in the scheme of things came to be at all fully appreciated; and even then the official conception of their functions was unduly narrow. At that stage they were reformed into a separate service like the Consular Service, and the Department of Overseas Trade was created as their immediate 'parent organisation' in London; this department in its turn being placed under joint control of the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade. All the emphasis was on the capturing or recapturing of export markets, and too little attention was paid in London to the wider problems of economics as a weapon of inter-state politics. We had not yet taken to state controls ourselves, and were slow to grasp the political implications of governmental intervention in this sphere by other powers such as the Soviet Union, Germany and Japan. Inevitably the members of the then Commercial Diplomatic Service tended in practice to become part-time economic advisers to their diplomatic chiefs, who were on the whole more conscious of these implications than the Departments at home; but in so far as they did so they were straying from the paths of straight commerce laid down for them by their parent organisation.

As a result of the Foreign Service reforms of 1943 there ceased to be a separate cadre of Commercial Diplomatic Officers: the ~~work is now done~~ by selected members of the amalgamated Foreign Service; but it is at all times the product of close collaboration between the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade. The latter Department is also invariably consulted about Commercial Diplomatic appointments, and issues instructions direct to Commercial Diplomatic officers in all matters of trade promotion. Those who now do the work can pass, in the course of their careers, to consular or 'straight diplomatic' work. Their specialisation in the commercial field may in fact be temporary only. But if it is to their liking, and they show an aptitude for it, they may devote to it most of their careers. The duality of their rôle is now officially recognised: they advise the missions at which they serve on general economic pro-

blems, and at the same time they further British trade by all legitimate means—co-ordinating in this latter capacity the similar work still performed by consular officers in the provinces. When there is a commercial treaty to conclude it is they who are the main negotiators, under the general direction of their diplomatic chiefs. When there is an intergovernmental trade negotiation to be put through it is they who do most of the spade-work—with the assistance, of course, of British commercial representatives specialised in the trade under discussion. They maintain close contact with the British chambers of commerce and individual British firms abroad; and a large part of their work consists in helping visiting British traders to get in touch with the most competent foreign officials. They also perform much useful work in advising British government departments and firms at home on the commercial and financial status of foreign firms with which it is proposed to do business. They correspond direct with the Board of Trade on commercial matters, but, like the Service Attachés, they usually send their more general economic reports home as enclosures in covering despatches from the head of the Mission to the Foreign Office.

The newest of the three general categories of specialists at diplomatic posts is that of the Information Officers, whose field is publicity and propaganda. They too, as indicated briefly in Chapter IV, have a somewhat chequered official pedigree. Until the second world war there were only a few of them, distributed among the most important posts, and they were then called Press Attachés. At that time the apparatus of British political publicity was negligible, and these Attachés were thus more receptive than productive. They maintained general liaison with the press of the countries in which they served, and studied and reported on its trends as regular members of the diplomatic missions. Then came the war phase when the original Press Attachés, together with a great many newcomers recruited in haste, were all brought under the control of the Ministry of Information, and British ideological propaganda swelled suddenly to enormous proportions under the compulsion of necessity. These representatives abroad of the Ministry of Information were officially attached to the diplomatic missions and were in theory responsible to the heads of the missions for their local activities, but they were paid by their own Ministry and supplied by it with all the publicity material they used. When at the end of 1945 the Ministry of Information was closed down and the productive side of its work (on a greatly-reduced scale) was taken over by the newly-created Central Office of Information, the cadres—also greatly reduced—of the information officers serving in foreign countries were absorbed into the amalgamated Foreign Service.

Present-day Information Officers therefore belong for the most part to the Service, and are, like the Commercial Diplomatic Officers, temporary specialists in the sense that they can be transferred in the course of their careers to its other spheres of work.<sup>1</sup>

The Information Officers cover the whole field of British publicity directed towards foreign countries, with the exception of the purely cultural and non-political field covered by the British Council and its representatives abroad. They study the local press and other media of publicity such as films and broadcasting; they keep in touch with those who control all these media; and they try to secure the reproduction in all of them of publicity material designed to make known the British way of life and the official British attitude towards current political questions. An Information Officer does not, of course, work in a completely watertight compartment within the mission, for it is one of the duties of all its members to cultivate the local press and publicists. But he is the whole-time specialist and expert adviser to the rest of the staff in this extremely important field. He has his own separate offices; which are often situated at some distance from the diplomatic mission and in a more bustling, less residential, part of the town where posters and other publicity material can produce the maximum effect on the passer-by. As he necessarily employs a clerical staff which is in the main locally recruited, this is not without its practical advantages from the point of view of security. But he usually has one or two rooms in the main Chancery building also, and keeps in close touch at all times with the head of the mission and its staff generally. A subsidiary duty of his is to manage the publicity connected with any public function in which the ambassador or minister takes part; ensuring, for example, that his chief's speeches are accurately reported in the local press.

Apart from these three main categories of specialists who are to be found at almost all posts, there is a fourth category which is regionally restricted. This is the category of the so-called *Oriental* Counsellors and Secretaries. They are needed at posts where the local language is particularly hard for an Englishman to learn, and almost all such posts are in Asia. Many specialists of this sort are senior officers who originally belonged to the regionally-specialised consular services. In the old days (as has already been briefly indicated in Chapter IV) certain consular officers spent their entire professional lives in the Middle East, or China, or Japan, or Siam, becoming great experts in their own particular areas. Now-

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, however, there are still several unestablished Information Officers in charge of the Information work at their posts; and about thirty per cent of the whole body of Information specialists (other than those of the purely clerical grades) are still unestablished too.



adays such regional specialisation of the life-long sort has been abandoned along with the separate identity of the consular cadre itself. It had indeed certain obvious disadvantages: consuls so employed were apt to acquire too narrow an outlook; and it was difficult, with so many watertight compartments, to ensure fairness in the regulation of promotion. The present method is therefore to provide concentrated courses of linguistic and regional study. There is, for example, a Middle East Centre for Arab Studies at Shemlan in the Lebanon for the joint use of students from the Foreign Service, the Armed Forces, other British Government Departments, and (on payment) business firms such as oil companies. It provides courses in the language, history and general outlook of the Arab states, and does so very efficiently. Similar full-time training is given, in Japan and at Hong Kong, for prospective Far Eastern experts.

It will be some time, however, before these new methods of concentrated training in Asiatic languages can make good the shortage of orientalists in the middle ranks of the Service which has resulted from the cessation of recruitment and training during the war years. For the present, as indicated above, the Foreign Service is still subsisting partly, so far as its cadre of oriental specialists is concerned, on an inheritance from the older system; and this inheritance, this dwindling fund of *expertise* of the slowly-matured sort, is still of considerable value. It will run out before long, as the survivors from the old dispensation retire; but by the time it does so the people now being trained in the new way should have acquired a good deal of practical experience in addition to the knowledge imbibed during their first intensive training. Moreover it may be assumed that by then a fair number of the local peculiarities which once made life-long specialisation so necessary will have faded. And although the Eastern languages will of course remain as difficult as ever for the Englishman, and will still have to be studied arduously by the prospective specialist, the knowledge and use of English in the Asiatic countries will undoubtedly go on spreading apace. • •

The main value of the oriental specialists in present conditions is of course their thorough knowledge of the local languages. Indigenous interpreters, unless under close and expert supervision, are seldom satisfactory or even tolerably reliable, though there are certain very honourable exceptions. But the Service experts are much more than mere interpreters and translators. The peoples of the countries to which their special training relates are for the most part very different from ourselves in traditions, outlook and manners—indeed it is one of the main difficulties of learning their languages that their processes of thought are so foreign to us. Though it is not difficult to strike up a superficial acquaintance with people of the

Asiatic races, to get to know them really well requires much time and assiduity. And it is the more necessary to do so in that the business of government is, in most Asiatic countries at any rate, conducted on a highly personal and individualistic basis. The job of the oriental specialist is not merely to bridge the linguistic gulf; he is an adviser to his chief and to the rest of the staff on all the peculiarities and unfamiliar aspects of the local scene. Unlike the specialists in the other categories which have been mentioned above, his specialisation is linguistic, geographical and political rather than professional; and for this reason he belongs essentially to what has been called elsewhere the political backbone of the mission at which he serves.

These oriental specialists are sometimes, but not always, organised in sub-departments of their own—'oriental secretariats', as they are usually called—which are separate from, but usually adjacent to, the main Chancery offices, and include a number of native clerks and writers working under supervision. Such indigenous employees are needed for the heavy routine work of translating correspondence. They are also needed for another reason: the Oriental Secretaries, for all their expert linguistic knowledge, are not competent as calligraphists. This may seem a trivial matter, but it illustrates very well how criteria of value are largely a matter of geography and how diplomatic missions have to adapt themselves to local criteria. The allegedly unchanging East is in fact constantly changing, and is gradually reconciling itself to the typewriter among many other Western inventions, but calligraphy still survives in many parts of it as a highly-prized art. There are people still in the Foreign Service who remember how the British Legation in a certain oriental country continued for years to employ an often drunken and always dissolute *munshi* simply because he wrote a most beautiful hand. It was found worth while, since official notes written by him were certain of receiving much more attention, and a much more benevolent attention, than those written by others who, being needed at posts possessed less calligraphic skill, particularly hard for an Englishman.

Thus far we have seen that all such posts are in Asia. Many specialists of course are senior officers who originally belonged to the regionally-specialised consular services. In the old days (as has already been briefly indicated in Chapter IV) certain consular officers spent their entire professional lives in the Middle East, or China, or Japan, or Siam, becoming great experts in their own particular areas. Now-

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to what extent the negotiating functions of a diplomatic representative can in fact be properly described as mechanical. For if they are fully so, in the sense that his rôle is predetermined by orders which he may not question and by a cut-and-dried code of procedure for the execution of them, does it matter much who or what he is, provided he be literate and possess a decent suit of clothes? Will he not fill the bill even if, like the unfortunate cavalry cadet at Saumur in the well-known story, he can only be described as '*capable de porter à pied un message écrit*'? What may be called the mechanistic view of modern diplomacy is so widespread that it is worth taking these questions seriously; and in order to answer them a digression into the realm of theory is required.

Ever since telegraphy was invented there have been people who have asserted that it has destroyed, or at all events greatly diminished, the status and prestige of diplomatic representatives. In the old days, so the argument runs, a newly-appointed ambassador did indeed set out with verbal and written instructions from his government about the attitude he was to adopt and the courses he was to pursue; but when he reached his post he found himself sundered from those he served by the wide stretches of a world in which communications were slow and undependable. All sorts of things might happen, and often did happen, which had not been foreseen when he left his own country. He could not ask for further instructions, because that would take far too long. He had therefore to bear a tremendous weight of personal responsibility, being required to act largely on his own initiative. This situation of quasi-independence, though alarming to all but the bravest, conferred great personal prestige. Nowadays, on the other hand, so it is argued, the diplomatic representative can ask for instructions as each new problem arises and get them without delay, for the telegraph has annihilated distance. He not only can: he must. For he is not a maker of policies, and it would clearly be wrong for him to behave as though 'countries' will undoubtedly longer any need. His personal status is

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of their democratic flesh, will be able to speak with one another daily and hourly as if there were no such thing as distance. The bureaucratic and non-parliamentary intermediaries will drop out because they are no longer required; and international relationships will surely benefit by this elimination of the unnecessary.

So runs the argument; and there is enough obvious truth in it to obscure the fallacies which it also contains. But they are large fallacies for all that. It postulates that direct contacts between the elected representatives of nations must necessarily be preferable in all circumstances to indirect ones. Yet no man who has spent his life in the conduct of international relations as a diplomatist would admit that this is true. It may conceivably become true in the still-remote future when national sovereignties have yielded place to a system of universal government and warfare is a thing of the past. But it is not true now. So long as international traffic remains imperfectly regulated it is well that each vehicle composing it should have ample room to manœuvre or be provided with fenders. The less room there is, the more essential the fenders become. And at present, when the scientific ingenuity of mankind has far outrun his moral progress and powers of social adaptation, they are very necessary indeed; for we are faced with a situation in which there is an ever-increasing congestion of traffic and no police force at all competent to regulate it.

In saying this, we would not for a moment be thought to imply that foreign ministers are less tactful as a class than professional diplomatists and must for this reason be kept at a distance from one another. Many international conferences have proved the contrary. But the foreign ministers themselves would be among the first to agree that in the conduct of international affairs the cushioning effect of professional diplomacy is still valuable and indeed essential. There are at least two reasons why it should be. The sheer volume of international business is already far too great in all countries to permit of its being conducted by a single man, however able; and it will be much greater still before scientific progress has perfected the mechanisms of communication to the point at which they would really suffice for such purposes. Hence it comes about that while no democratic system yet devised has even attempted to solve the problem of the crushing responsibility borne by foreign ministers (who continue to be held answerable for everything that their foreign services do), they must in practice be spared the taking of many decisions of secondary but still considerable importance. If the heads of British missions abroad did not display a great deal of initiative, they would completely swamp not only the Foreign Secretary himself but his department also.

The fact is that telegraphic and telephonic communications have not achieved what some theorists suppose them to have achieved, since it turns out that they are not after all the only operative factor—the other being the sheer pressure of business. For the diplomatist, the change has not been from burden to relief, but from one burden with compensations to another more or less without them. In the old days an ambassador might incur censure for having taken the wrong decision, but never for having taken a decision. Now he is constantly faced with a more complicated and uncomfortable choice: shall he refer home for instructions—thereby overburdening the Department and risking a bad mark for apparent lack of self-reliance; or shall he take the decision on his own—risking, if later it is not approved, a double bad mark for having been both wrong in his judgment and presumptuous in exercising it at all?

Moreover even if foreign ministers were physically capable of handling the bulk of foreign affairs by direct long-distance contact in the manner envisaged by the theorists, they would still, no doubt, prefer not to handle in this manner any but a few special items of business. We have spoken of the diplomatist as a fender, and it is in fact part of his duties to be one. By functioning as an intermediary he provides the makers of policy with time to think. International business is usually most intricate and full of pitfalls; every move is liable to have far-reaching consequences. Direct negotiation between principals is therefore apt to be dangerous by reason of its finality. It gives no time for reflexion, and there is little possibility of retrieving mistakes once they have been made. The diplomatist as intermediary can always take the blame, and not infrequently does. When any back-peddalling is necessary in foreign policy he can always say to the Minister for Foreign Affairs: 'I think I may have failed to put your point clearly enough to my government, so give me time to explain it to them again.' He does so (or at any rate appears to do so); and with the most gratifying results. The rub has been taken by a fender; the principals have not lost face.

For these and other reasons the head of a British diplomatic mission is far from being, in his negotiating rôle, the mere relay station or ventriloquist's dummy that many people suppose him to be. And the Foreign Office certainly do not treat him as one. Though they use telegraphic communications with him as far as the pressure on a limited apparatus permits, they recognise fully that as the man on the spot he is likely to be quite often right, and they usually ride him on a loose rein. In sending him instructions they habitually use the phrase 'unless Your Excellency sees objection'; and this is no mere formula of politeness. He may, and sometimes will, reply that he does see objection—the moment is not propitious for reasons

which he gives, and he 'urges with all deference' that action should be postponed or modified accordingly. If the Department still insist, he must of course comply without further argument; but generally they will accept his advice, for they do not pretend to know the ins and outs of the local situation as well as he does. In most cases, too, they give him a good deal of latitude as to the form in which he takes such action as they may prescribe, leaving it to his judgment whether to use the heavy gun of a signed official note or some lighter piece from his armoury. There are occasions of course when they feel it necessary, with an eye to the future, to go on the record in some specific manner; but as a rule it is the result that concerns them rather than the method of achieving it. This latitude is often of the greatest value to the diplomatic intermediary in acquitting himself efficiently of his task. No two governments are alike in the way in which they react to the various forms of approach. With some, a stiff note may be the best method; with others, more can be done by the spoken word; an informal preparatory message to the Palace or the Presidency may make all the difference; and so on.

It is not however proposed to describe all the various mechanisms of approach and the technical distinctions between them. Like the nuances of the diplomatic vocabulary in general, these distinctions are apt to appear very tenuous, if not indeed meaningless, to those who stand outside; though in point of fact they have their uses within the trade, as marking in a recognisable way and according to an accepted code the varying degrees of formality, emphasis and gravity. One example will be given by way of illustration. If a diplomatic representative has an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and presents him in the course of it with an unsigned paper written in a particular form and headed '*pour mémoire*', this paper is an entirely informal note of what he has to say and is intended merely to help the Minister in making his own record; it has no official existence, and may not be quoted specifically in later official correspondence. If on the other hand he presents a paper with much the same form and contents but headed '*aide-mémoire*', it is an official (though not very formal) document, and may be quoted and generally treated as such.

What is much more important than these technical distinctions, of course, is the manner and tone in which the representative speaks. He will always, indeed, be scrupulously polite and moderate in his language, but if he knows his job he will have no difficulty in conveying by his general demeanour what it is necessary that he should convey. His keyboard is the whole compass of reasoned personal discussion and persuasion; and these things are not to be described

analytically. In diplomacy, as in other arts, there are rules that govern the outward form and can seldom be defied with advantage, but compliance with them does not make the work of art, any more than the proper stretching of a canvas does. Try as one may to be more definite, all one can really say of the diplomatist's negotiating function is that the art of it consists, within the framework of certain conventions, of bringing human personality to bear upon facts and circumstances more or less tractable.

It is undeniable that this leaves natural curiosity largely unsatisfied. Professional diplomatists are always at a loss when pressed to describe not merely the general nature of their work, but how they actually go about it. Their difficulty is that the material equipment which they use is so simple as to be entirely unexciting. It cannot be hard for a naval or army officer to describe in detail and in an interesting way the various operations that make up his official life and duty, for these operations call for the use of much fascinating apparatus and cover a variety of geographical fields. And this, no doubt, is true of the administrator also, particularly if he works in colonial territories overseas. But the main operations of the diplomatist take place in perfectly nondescript four-walled rooms; and the only equipment he really needs (apart, that is, from an apparatus of communications which cannot for obvious reasons be described in detail) consists of a tongue and a pen. One cannot generalise in an interesting way about the use of such things; and one cannot particularise without giving a factual description, such as would clearly be improper in a book of this sort, of some more or less contemporary diplomatic transaction between Her Majesty's Government and a foreign power. Perhaps therefore a precautionary word is called for at this point. Since it is so much easier to describe the diplomatist's social activities than his more workaday labours, any account of his life is apt to give the impression that he is little more than a public eater, drinker and talker, a sort of professional man-about-town. In point of fact, however, he spends a large part of his time, notwithstanding the wide diversity of his representational duties, either writing official reports in his own office or discussing business in somebody else's. Normally he is in the public eye for considerably less than the half of his working hours; the rest is office business, interesting in matter but not in manner.

Nevertheless the social activities of the head of a diplomatic mission, and those of his staff in proportion to their seniority, are of real importance. They flow naturally from the fact that, as has already been said, the diplomatist's rôle is essentially that of an honoured guest. And they range from quite informal luncheons and dinner-parties, through the foreign equivalents of a Lord Mayor's

banquet with broadcast toasts and speeches, to the extreme pomp and formality of the ceremony at which—in a uniform heavy and stiff with gold braid, and accompanied by all his senior staff in varying degrees of the same physical discomfort—he presents his letters of credence to the reigning monarch or the president of the republic. He may be invited to anything from the launching of a battleship to the inspection of a home for foundlings in which the wife of some high official happens to be interested; and whatever the occasion may be he must appear delighted to be there. But the bulk of this social life consists in entertaining and being entertained to luncheon or dinner. At all posts, and particularly at the smaller ones, the head of a British diplomatic mission is inescapably a social lion of the first magnitude. In the official order of precedence he usually ranks before cabinet ministers; and he possesses, to the average hostess, the added draw of being a foreigner. He has to cultivate, in addition to all the leading groups of the local society, his numerous diplomatic colleagues and the resident community of non-official British subjects. He has also to entertain his own staff, for whom he stands *in loco parentis*. It is small wonder in these circumstances that his waking hours should scarcely ever be his own. The stay-at-home British taxpayer is apt to think with envy—and even with indignation (since he pays for it)—of the British diplomatic representative's life as one of perpetual carousing at groaning boards. And he is not very wide of the mark so far as representational duties are concerned. But the representative himself feels the envy and indignation to be misplaced. He is, indeed—or should be—a person with a very well-developed taste for the society of others; but one can have too much of a good thing, and the fact is that the conscientious diplomatist almost always has too much. For in addition to all these social activities he has a full working day; and as he sits at his own or another man's table, or watches with every appearance of interest the filing past of endless companies of boy-scouts, or listens smiling to the interminable reminiscences of the President of the Senate, he never forgets that the paper work is piling up remorselessly at the office.

Even the most sympathetic outsider, who fully understands that these social and representational duties of the diplomatist are unavoidable on grounds of courtesy, is inclined quite naturally to wonder whether they are of any more practical use. Can state secrets really be picked up, like salted almonds, at the dinner-tables of 'society' (as the novelists so readily assume); and if they cannot, what (apart from mere politeness) is the point of it all? The answer is that they cannot—or at any rate seldom can—and that the point is quite different. Certainly a part of the diplomatist's task is to find out as



much as he can about what other people are actually thinking; but above all his job is to find out how they think—what their mental processes are in general, and hence how any one group of them is likely to behave in a given situation. His study should not by any means be confined to 'society' and the official world; for in these days there are, in most foreign countries, numerous other groups and classes exercising a profound influence on the shaping of the nation's attitude and conduct. Nevertheless in almost all countries there still exists a numerically small inner core of people whose influence is preponderant; and it is part of the diplomatist's business to know them personally in order to learn all he can of the way their minds work.

This is part of the diplomatist's business—the colder and more official side of it. Amongst other things he must in fact be an objective and analytical observer of the human scene on which his official life is played. But that is by no means all. If he is to make the most of his job he must make friends. The object of genuine diplomacy is not mere acquaintance (though that is an essential) but real friendship between nations; not a mere spying out of the land, but the creation of a relationship in which intimate knowledge of the other party leads to tolerance and understanding. And amongst intelligent people friendship cannot be successfully simulated for long, since it is something apprehended partly by senses other than those listed in the biological textbooks. The diplomatist must, therefore, possess in his social dealings the indefinable capacity for liking and being liked, as well as the power of objective analysis. He cannot, of course, succeed in this with everyone all the time; and he will succeed least well in countries such as those beyond the Iron Curtain which are fundamentally hostile to our way of life. But within these inescapable limitations the degree of his success in making friends will normally be the measure of his usefulness as a whole; for, as we have indicated before, the essence of diplomacy is the personal factor.

What has been said above about the social rôle of the head of a mission applies to every member of his staff in greater or lesser degree according to his grade. But it applies particularly to the Branch A officers and to the senior grades of Branch B, who receive entertainment allowances in addition to their basic salaries. (The allowances received by the head of a mission are known as 'frais', i.e., *frais de représentation*, and cover a slightly wider field of representational expenditure.) Those who receive such allowances are expected to spend them fully, and also to spend the greater part of their basic salaries, on the business of official living—with the curious result that junior members of the staff who may and do live

more modestly are often a good deal better off than their seniors in terms of capital and savings.

The younger secretaries who receive entertainment allowances do not, of course, normally consort with exactly the same people as the ambassador does. The specialist members of the staff naturally concentrate for the most part on their professional 'opposite numbers'; and the non-specialists try to cover between them the remaining field of influential personalities and social groups. Thus, in a country where the university students and the younger intelligentsia are politically important it will probably be the duty of one particular junior secretary to get to know as many of them as possible. (He is, of course, likely to be better fitted for this than his seniors would be even if they had not other social fields to cultivate.) But there can easily be too much regimentation in a matter of this sort. One may indeed study a particular social *milieu*, but one makes one's friends on a less conscious pattern. There are certain foreign diplomatic services whose practice it is to make their missions divide up the cultivable field in a very rigid and obvious manner; and to those who do not approve of it this is known as the 'pumping stations system'. Any advantages which it may confer by reason of its neatness and comprehensiveness are usually outweighed by the constraint that these same qualities naturally tend to impose. If the object is to be genuine friendship and not mere pumping, a wide latitude must be allowed to each member of the staff in the matter of social contacts; and in the British Foreign Service it always is allowed.

## CHAPTER VII

### *Consuls and Consular Establishments .*

THERE are, of course, differences between life at normal diplomatic missions to foreign countries and life at consular posts (or at delegations to international bodies, or at the Foreign Office); but there are also a great many identical or similar things. Hence in the present and other chapters of this part of the book we shall try to save space and avoid repetition by concentrating mainly on what is dissimilar.

In particular, consular life and work are in many ways a projection on the provincial background, and on a miniature scale, of the life and work at an embassy or legation. The head of a diplomatic mission represents his Sovereign (personally, if he is an ambassador) and his country in a foreign state; the head of a consular post is the agent for his country in one particular province or district or colony of that state, under the general direction and control of the head of the mission. The ambassador or minister plenipotentiary consorts and negotiates with the central authorities in the capital city; the consul consorts and negotiates with municipal and provincial officials. (There is, however, a difference here, apart from that of scale: strictly speaking a diplomatic representative may negotiate with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his staff only;<sup>1</sup> whereas a consul is freer, and may deal with all those provincial authorities whose activities affect his official interests—going direct to the prefect or the mayor for one thing, to the chief of police for another, and so on). Consuls, like diplomatists, have staffs subordinate to them (though usually much smaller ones), and preside over them in the same patriarchal manner. There is broadly the same system of drafting, minuting, registering and office work generally; though the complexities and rigidities are less because the organisation is smaller. The consul entertains and is entertained in much the same way as the diplomatist, and needs the same qualities of mind and heart as the latter in the performance of the social and representational side of his work. Being under the general orders of the head

<sup>1</sup> At present, under the stress of new conditions, certain minor derogations from this unwritten rule are tolerated. In particular, technical negotiations with ministries other than the ministry of foreign affairs may sometimes be conducted in the name of the head of a diplomatic mission by specialised members of his staff such as experts seconded from the Treasury. But the rule still holds good in the main.

of the diplomatic mission in the country where they both serve, he reports on political and general economic questions to the mission, which will often transmit a copy of his despatch to the Foreign Office with comments of its own; though on certain other and secondary matters he reports direct to the Foreign Office, and on most commercial matters (as distinct from general economic questions) he corresponds direct with the Board of Trade. Occasionally he will correspond with these and other authorities 'under flying seal'—that is, sending his despatch ready-signed to the mission for forwarding if it is approved.

From what has been said so far it might not unreasonably be inferred that the consul is simply a diplomatist in miniature, or a mere outlying member of a diplomatic mission who enjoys no more independence than that necessarily conferred by physical separation and an imperfect system of communications. The inference would not be wholly unfounded; and the element of truth in it has fostered the erroneous but popular conception of a consul as an inferior type of diplomat. Provincial centres *are* much more numerous than national capitals, and almost always of less political importance. Consuls *are* therefore much more numerous than diplomatists. They *are* in most respects subordinated to the heads of the diplomatic missions; and inevitably so, since in any working institution the shape of authority is bound to be pyramidal. Indeed so definite is the quality of subordination that in most capital cities nowadays it has been found convenient to abolish the consular post as a distinct and separately-housed organisation (it will be explained later why there should be need for such posts in the capitals as well as the provincial centres), and to bring it wholly within the physical orbit of the embassy or legation as a mere 'consular section'.

But the consular officer is not in fact merely a diplomatist in miniature: his work is in some ways different in kind from that of the diplomatist, as well as being always on a smaller geographical and governmental scale. And the effect of the amalgamation of 1943 was not that it abolished these differences of scale and kind (it could not do so, for they were part of the web of international life); but that, by providing a common basis of training and service for the new entrant, coupled with interchangeability of personnel at all levels but the highest, it broke down the professional and personal barriers between parts of an organisation which had, despite these differences, become largely unified in function. The head of a diplomatic mission in a foreign country will always be the directing head of British representation throughout that country. But in future he may well himself have been at some stage a consul under a diplo-

matic chief, and the consuls serving under him will have served also as diplomatists of one rank or another. Nobody, therefore, will in future feel—as diplomatists and consuls undoubtedly did sometimes feel in the past—that the other man is a different sort of animal.

Nor is that all. In the old days the methods of entry were not quite the same for the Diplomatic and Consular Services; and the conditions of service, again, were different in many things such as pay and allowances—not that the consul was always the worse off, though he could not rise so high. The two entrance examinations, in particular, tended to foster a sort of uneasy class consciousness; for though in most respects they were identical, there was a difference between them in the standards of marking. Usually therefore a candidate took the stiffer examination of the two, in the knowledge that if he gained one of the first five or six places he would be eligible for the Diplomatic Service, but that if he were placed in the next dozen or so beneath this highest category he could probably enter the Consular Service as a second best. (A few stood for the easier test only, in the conviction that they lacked the means or the social equipment for a diplomatic career.) All this tended to give the consular entrant a sense of inferiority—often transmuted, in the course of time, into a protective mechanism of expressed disdain for the mere good examinee or paper man. The unified examinations introduced in 1943, and the complete assimilation of the conditions of service, put an end to all such rubs and sorenesses.

There are, as has been said above, differences of kind as well as of scale between the work of a consul and that of the head of a diplomatic mission. The main difference of kind is, in point of fact, a consequence of the difference of scale. The administrative entity with which a consul deals is smaller than that dealt with by the diplomatic representative under whom he serves (though if the consul happens to be serving in a colonial dependency he may well cover an area far larger than the metropolitan territory to which it is politically subordinated); and, being smaller, it is not sovereign, but merely part of a larger political whole. This difference chiefly affects the consul's functions as a negotiator. His reporting duties are identical in kind, though not in scale, with those of the diplomatic mission: he reports on the political, economic and social developments taking place in one part of the country, whereas the mission reports on these same kinds of developments taking place in the country as a whole. The political element in his reporting reflects the fact that his district always plays a rôle of some sort in the internal politics of the country, and thereby influences to some extent its external political relations also. But the rôle played by a provincial district in a

country's external politics, though it may be important in point of influence, does not normally include major negotiation with the outside world by its officials. As a rule it is only at the diplomatic level and in the capital city that decisions in the general political sphere can be reached and binding international agreements concluded. Consequently it is no part of the normal duties of a consul to engage in political negotiation. Nevertheless there are of course many regions of the world where conditions are in some degree politically abnormal; and in these a consul's functions will in some degree (though not necessarily in like degree) be abnormal too.

Let us consider first the various types of politically normal conditions. If a consul's post happens to be the capital city, he will have no duties at all in the sphere of political negotiation. In most capitals, as we have seen, he functions actually within the physical orbit of the mission, controlling the consular section of it. In such cases he is, to all intents and purposes, simply a specialised member of the mission staff. Again, if his post is in one of the provincial centres of a country which is, administratively speaking, closely knit and under full control from the capital, he will have no part to play as a political negotiator. If however his post is in a region which enjoys a measure of autonomy with the consent of the central government, he may on occasion be called upon to negotiate in political matters of secondary importance. This applies chiefly to colonial dependencies, where he is the man on the spot and the spot is a long way from the metropolitan capital. All these are varieties of politically normal conditions.

It may be, however, that a consul's post lies in some region which is to some extent politically independent of the central government in practice though that government does not wish it to be. Here the situation is politically abnormal; and here perforce the consul is, potentially at least, a political negotiator. Whether he is actually one, and if so to what extent, will depend upon the impact of this regional quasi-independence on the legitimate interests of Her Majesty's Government. So far as possible they will always try to continue negotiating exclusively with the central authorities in the capital city; but if the administrative impotence of the latter makes such negotiation useless and thereby imperils British interests, they may have to adopt short-circuiting tactics, and the consul's status will thus abnormally approximate to that of the head of a diplomatic mission. There have in the past been quite a number of countries, in Asia and elsewhere, which were permanently unable to exercise effective administrative control in outlying areas over which they claimed sovereign rights; and in such areas we have had to

maintain what are unofficially known in the 'Service as 'political consuls'. But these are exceptions created by external abnormality; and the general rule holds good that a consul is not a political negotiator, though he is always a political reporter. ,

Consular officers have, however, a number of lesser and specialised negotiating functions which in the aggregate are of great practical importance. These, as we shall show presently, derive historically from the earliest and unofficial phase of their professional lineage. Before there were either diplomatists or consuls functioning regularly in foreign lands as the official representatives of overseas governments, there were foreigners recognised more or less formally by the authorities of the countries in which they lived as the spokesmen and protectors of their compatriot communities; and it is the consuls who, in later ages of specialised and official representation abroad, carried on this highly necessary work.

They are the better equipped to do so in that they are less sacrosanct than the diplomatists. An ambassador, as the personal representative of his Sovereign and the negotiator in all matters of high politics, is inescapably a privileged being who must be treated with special courtesy and care; and the counterpart of his privileged status is that he is a good deal hedged about with precautionary formalities. As already stated, he may negotiate with the Minister for Foreign Affairs only; and this sometimes irksome restriction is merely one of the forms of hedging about—it would not be thought consonant with his rank and dignity that any should do business with him save the minister whose special function it is to provide contact between the cabinet and foreign envoys. The lesser diplomatists of the mission, being regarded as his personal staff, are similarly cushioned and similarly circumscribed. A consul, however, is a less privileged guest. Such immunities as he may have in any given country are not enjoyed as of general right under international law: they are granted either as a matter of courtesy, or on the basis of a specific and bilateral consular convention; and they are seldom as comprehensive as those enjoyed by the diplomatist. In some cases, indeed, extraterritorial privilege extends only to his official archives. But all this makes him freer in action, not less free. Because he travels in a less stately and ponderous coach the lanes and by-ways are accessible to him. And this puts him in a very much better position to look after the individual interests, both personal and commercial, of his unofficial compatriots.

When for instance a British subject is arrested by the police, it is the British consul who enquires into his case at the police station or the Ministry of Justice, goes to see him in gaol, arranges for him to be defended by a reliable advocate, and probably attends the

subsequent trial. The ambassador and his diplomatic staff, though they remain behind the scenes and apparently uninterested, are in reality by no means indifferent to the fate of their fellow-countrymen abroad and the treatment meted out to them in personal and commercial matters. Usually indeed it is they, and not the consul, who act (through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) when any general question of this sort arises or any comprehensive official complaint has to be made. But in individual cases the consul is the normal intermediary, owing to his greater freedom of action and to the fact that he is allowed to see more of the seamy side of local affairs. His duty is not merely to help his compatriots when they get into deserved or undeserved legal trouble: he is the official godfather of the local British community in all the aspects of its corporate life. At one moment he may be trying, in an evil-smelling gaol, to obtain from a still befuddled British merchant seaman a coherent account of his escapades of the previous night. At another he may be discussing with the eminently respectable manager of a British engineering firm the best means of improving the heating system of the Anglican church, or the awkward business of the pew which Miss So-and-So claims as hers by inalienable right on the ground that she was governess to the Heir Apparent some thirty years back. At another, again, he may be wrestling with some far-reaching problem, such as the introduction of new regulations about residence permits for foreigners, which directly affects a large number of his compatriots as individuals. He probably spends much time and thought on such thorny questions as the financing and upkeep of local British schools and hospitals. He has, in short, a watching brief for individual British interests of every kind and all degrees of importance; and 'the colony' (as the resident British community is generally called) looks for help and advice to him rather than to the diplomatic mission. Moreover unless he happens to be serving in the capital city he must cope in the first instance—under the general direction, that is, of the commercial diplomatic staff of the mission—with the commercial as well as the personal problems of his community.

Until recently the British consuls in a good many parts of the world were not merely the official godfathers of the local British communities: they had, in relation to these communities, full magisterial powers. It is worth while to look back for a moment at the historical evolution of consular work which led eventually to this state of affairs. The main line of the shared diplomatic and consular pedigree goes back to Constantinople in the Middle Ages. In point of fact it can be traced back, in a general way, much further still—through Byzantium to the Greek city states



of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.<sup>1</sup> But we need not, for our present purposes, follow it so far. It was at Constantinople, and in the later Middle Ages, that consular and diplomatic functions first began to assume their respective modern forms. And although the common Hellenic ancestor of all present-day foreign representatives appears to have been more diplomatic than consular—a dealer in high international politics rather than a protector of local foreign communities and interests—it is broadly true to say that in the Byzantine phase the consular type of function predominated. For this reason it has often been claimed for (and by) the consuls that theirs is the longer pedigree. That, however, is a trifle misleading, even if one goes no further back than to the Byzantine phase. The diplomatic and consular aspects of what we should nowadays call Foreign Service work seem to have evolved side by side in the Byzantine world, and the former was not an offshoot or by-product of the latter, for all it is difficult to distinguish clearly between the two in the first stages. There must always have been diplomatic envoys of a sort—that is, people sent to accomplish specific diplomatic tasks abroad. And in that sense diplomacy is probably the older branch of the family. But it was a long time before the modern practice came to be adopted of maintaining resident diplomatic representatives abroad for the handling of international relations on a permanent basis. It is true that, from mediaeval times, resident papal legates have in effect been the diplomatic representatives of the Holy See; but papal representation and diplomatic representation of secular states have separate histories. It is usually held that the exchange of permanent diplomatic representatives was first practised by Venice and other Italian city states with special interests at Constantinople; and from them it gradually spread westwards to our own country by way of France and Spain. But much earlier a specifically consular form of activity had achieved general recognition in the Byzantine world. This was not the consular function as we now understand it; but it was its forebear.

Nowadays we think of both diplomatists and consuls as people sent by one sovereign state to reside and work in another by arrangement between the two governments concerned. Bilateral recognition of the official status of such people is, in fact, of the

<sup>1</sup> Egyptian records provide evidence of quasi-diplomatic activities at a much earlier date even than this; and it may reasonably be assumed that forms of diplomacy (though not of organised and permanent diplomatic representation) were practised in the remotest historical times. But the pedigree of the contemporary system of diplomatic and consular representation—a system which came to full maturity in Western Europe and was later adopted by the non-European world—cannot be convincingly traced back beyond the Greek city states.

essence of the system as it exists today. And probably this was always true of the diplomatists. But the prototype of the modern consul was a man who had not been sent by any government to represent it abroad and had no official standing in the eyes of any authorities save those in whose territory he lived. He was simply a trader who resided permanently in a foreign country and came in the course of time to be officially treated, by the government of that country only, as the representative of a group of other traders who were of the same race as he and similarly situated. The local authorities accorded him this official recognition for their own administrative convenience, and unilaterally, not by agreement with another power. The community he belonged to was in the nature of an embedded foreign body, and the local authorities had to deal with it as such. The most practical way was to make it choose a spokesman and to deal with it through him.

This phase of unilateral recognition for consuls (or, to speak more accurately, consuls in embryo), like that of the impermanent or *ad hoc* diplomatic envoys, lasted for several centuries in the Byzantine world. Long before the system of permanent diplomatic representation was evolved, however, the Venetian and other embryonic consuls had blossomed out into full (i.e., bilaterally-recognised) consular status. They continued indeed to be traders permanently resident abroad, not people officially sent abroad on government work. But gradually they were recognised as official representatives by the overseas governments to which they belonged by race, as well as by the governments under whose jurisdiction they lived. It is fair to call this development the beginning of the modern consular phase; for, although nowadays most consular officers are career men in the sense of being appointed at home and sent to work exclusively for their governments in a succession of foreign countries, there are still many of the resident trader type—as we have seen in Chapter III, we ourselves continue to employ a good many of them. The professional ancestor of the modern consul is thus the Venetian 'Baylo' at Constantinople (the title is etymologically the same as our word 'bailiff'); who, as spokesman and representative of the Venetian trading community, was at first recognised by the Byzantine authorities only, but later by the Venetian also. When, later still, the Venetians began to employ resident diplomatic representatives at Constantinople, these seem to have taken over the title of Baylo for themselves; but it had originally connoted a purely consular status, and no doubt there continued to be specifically consular Venetian representatives in the Byzantine domains.

It is worth noting that the modern Greeks still use for 'ambassador'

the word '*presbys*', the basic meaning of which in classical times was 'an old man'. (Incidentally our word 'priest' derives from the comparative form of the same Greek word used as an adjective, and originally meant 'an elder'.) This certainly suggests the senior member and spokesman of a permanent foreign community rather than a man sent out from one country to do a job in another. The late Professor H. C. Wyld, of Oxford, delving back still further into the Indo-germanic origins of '*presbys*', seems to have concluded that in remotest times the word probably meant something like 'a leading ox'—its components being a prefix meaning 'before, in advance' and a root-word from which 'bovine' is descended! No less interesting—and also no less deflating to professional vanity—are the views of the same academic authority on our own high-sounding word 'ambassador'. It certainly comes down to us from the Latin '*ambactus*', which connoted 'a vassal depending upon a lord'; and '*ambactus*' is generally thought to have been a borrowed Celtic word. But Professor Wyld suggested that the basic components were probably '*ambi*-' ('about') and '*ag*-' (a root, common to Celtic and Latin, which had 'to drive, impel' as its main meaning amongst several). This suggests the other, 'peripatetic', conception of diplomatic and consular life. Indeed it seems to go further, and to suggest 'someone who gets pushed around'.

As has been said above, the practice of employing resident diplomatic representatives abroad spread eventually to this country. But with us it took a long time to become firmly established. And meanwhile we had gone through the same process of transition from unilateral to bilateral recognition of consular status. At first, that is, there were English traders in foreign seaports who enjoyed local recognition only; but later these were adopted, as it were, into the English official hierarchy.

But to return to the Byzantine consular lineage: the Venetian and other consuls in the Byzantine domains undoubtedly exercised magisterial powers over their compatriot communities on occasion, as well as merely representing them; but with the advent of the Ottoman Turks these powers appear to have become more extensive and more regularly exercised. In dealing with such communities the Turks were faced with a much more difficult problem than their Byzantine predecessors had been, for their cultural and religious background was altogether different and they possessed far less administrative experience. Moslem law was too closely bound up with the Islamic tradition to be conveniently applied to the embedded communities of alien faith. The Ottoman authorities, moreover, were on the whole very tolerant. They had no wish to disrupt the foreign communities, whose skill as traders and artisans

was of great value to them. All they wanted was that these communities should behave with docility and pay poll-tax in lieu of military service (which was the privilege of true believers). Hence to an increasing extent the consuls were charged with the work of presiding as judges over their communities and administering them according to their own laws. This arrangement was the prototype of all those systems of capitulations that were later introduced in other parts of the world into which Europeans penetrated as traders with powerful foreign governments behind them. In its later phases the capitulatory system, originally the spontaneous product of Ottoman (and pre-Ottoman) tolerance and administrative *laissez faire*, came to be regarded as an aggressive manifestation of European arrogance—though in fact it was for the most part fully justified by the corruption and inefficiency of the native courts of law. As such, it eventually succumbed to the combined effects of Asiatic nationalism and of progress in the native administrations of justice. But while it lasted the consul serving in the countries where it existed remained a highly-specialised official who was also a very important person in his own provincial orbit.

In China, for example, the British Minister Plenipotentiary at Peking was, to the British traders of Shanghai, a remote and usually inaccessible being, invested no doubt with great prestige as the head of all British representation throughout the Manchu Empire, but of little practical importance in their own day-to-day lives. The Consul-General at Shanghai, on the other hand, was not only the official head of their own community, but also the magistrate before whom they would be called upon to appear whenever they became involved with the law. He did not merely arbitrate in their internal disputes: he judged and sentenced them (subject to a certain measure of supervision from London) when they committed offences and crimes. Many years ago the British Legation in a certain Central Asiatic state was the scene of a murder. Both the assailant and his victim—it was a domestic triangle of the usual sort—were senior members of the mission; but the case came before a consular court. Actually it was the Minister himself who presided, since he happened to hold also the title of consul-general. But he presided in his consular capacity; and if the murder had been committed in one of those countries where the head of the mission had no consular status, the court trying this affair among diplomatists would have been presided over by a member of the Consular Service.

The not very remote period of the capitulations was thus in some ways the golden age of the Consular Service. Consuls (like diplomatists) have since come down a little in the world—at all

events in those countries where capitulatory systems were formerly in force. They are no longer the judges of their fellow-countrymen abroad; and inevitably their general prestige and importance have waned somewhat in an age of steadily improving communications and tightened control from the centre. It is true that this same age pays increasing attention to trade, the furtherance of which has always been one of the consul's principal duties. But in this field, not less than in others, centralisation is the order of the day: the diplomatic missions, once shy of commercial matters, now actively co-ordinate and supervise the efforts of consular officers to promote British trade. Nevertheless the consul remains an important person in his own sphere. He is still the head of the local British community *ex officio*; and, as stated above, the community still looks to him, rather than to the diplomatic mission, for the protection and furtherance of its interests. All that has been said in the last chapter about the fallacies of the 'mechanistic' view of diplomacy—according to which the diplomatist is a mere automaton at the end of a wire leading to the Foreign Office—applies with equal force to the relationship between consuls and their superintending diplomatic chiefs. Absolute centralisation of control is not yet a physical possibility, since the sheer bulk and growing importance of international affairs have largely offset the factor of improved communications; and even if it were ever to become so it would still be an undesirable thing, seeing that the personality of the man on the spot will always count for much. The head of a diplomatic mission abroad would never dream of trying to manipulate his outlying consular officers as mere puppets. It is not for nothing that he is in the same trade himself.

Consuls, moreover, still have one highly-specialised and difficult duty that resembles their former judicial function under the capitulations. Those of them who serve in seaports—and for obvious reasons a great many of them do—are called upon to take an official hand in any disputes that may arise between the masters of British merchant ships and members of the crews. Technically speaking, indeed, they do not actually adjudicate in such disputes. But they have to take various forms of action based on their interpretation of the Merchant Shipping Acts, and in the process of doing so they certainly come very near to adjudication in practice. If, for instance, the master of a British merchant ship wishes to discharge a seaman in a foreign port for alleged refusal to obey a lawful command, the consul is required under these Acts to investigate so far as possible whether the accusation is well-founded; and discharge may not take place unless, as a result of this investigation, he endorses the relevant document. For this purpose he hears what

all the parties to the dispute have to say about it; and his ruling, though liable to be set aside if there is appeal later to a court of law in the United Kingdom, undoubtedly decides the seaman's fate for the time being.

This is anxious and often thankless work of a sort that lies altogether outside the ken of the old-fashioned career diplomatist. The British consular officers who perform it certainly cannot be justly accused as a class of being other than completely impartial; but inevitably they *are* sometimes so accused. The consul, very likely, has entertained the master to dinner a night or two before the hearing takes place—he would indeed be held remiss in the social side of his work if he did not—and the seaman not unnaturally tends to believe that the ruling, if it happens to go against him, has been influenced by this. If he is a 'sea lawyer' as well as a seaman, he will make all the trouble he can for the consul. All this is unavoidable, and stems from the fact that there is no other British official on the spot who could properly give a decision in a matter involving British merchant shipping law as embodied in an Act of Parliament. It is a tribute to the real impartiality of British consular officers that complaints of this sort are made in only a very small proportion of the cases dealt with, and that when made they are very seldom shown to have any justification.

In this and similar matters the consul acts as the agent of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, and corresponds direct with that Department. He has many other shipping duties. When a British merchant vessel enters a foreign port the first thing the master does, if his ship is to be in port for forty-eight hours or more, is to deposit with the consul his 'articles of agreement', obtaining in exchange a certificate for use with the customs and other local authorities. When he is ready to sail again he recovers this document, on evidence being produced that the local authorities consider him to have conformed to their regulations. Hence a great deal of a seaport consul's work is done on shipboard, and at all hours of the day and night. In addition to the entering and clearing of British ships, he must see to the signing on and off of British seamen; examine their wage accounts; take over the balance of their wages and effects, and repatriate them, when they are obliged for any reason to leave their ships; obtain hospital treatment for them when necessary; and so on. His duties further include the handling of various complicated technical matters relating to marine protests, bills of lading, lay days, demurrage and the like.

Apart from these specialised functions of consuls at seaports, all consular officers have various special duties arising out of their tutelary connexion with the local British communities. A consul

keeps registers of the births and deaths of British subjects in his district, and forwards these statistics annually to the Registrar-General in London. Where the local law permits the celebration of consular marriages, he holds a warrant empowering him to solemnise marriages for British subjects. He is also authorised in certain circumstances to attend and register marriages of British subjects which take place in accordance with the local laws. He is empowered to do notarial work, and can administer oaths and take affidavits. Where the local law permits, he may have to take the evidence of witnesses and arrange for the service of judicial documents connected with legal proceedings in civil and commercial matters which are pending in English, Scottish or Northern Irish courts. It is he who issues passports to locally resident citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies, and to locally resident British Protected Persons; and grants visas for the United Kingdom to foreign applicants in accordance with standing Foreign Office regulations—which, in present conditions, are necessarily bulky and complicated. Finally, it is he who assists indigent or stranded British subjects abroad and arranges for their repatriation by the most economical means, against promise of repayment. This last type of duty can be very harrowing at times; it is so when the person concerned—perhaps rooted completely in the foreign country and without friends in England—comes to grief through no fault of his own. At others, when the person concerned is merely feckless, it can be very troublesome.

We have mentioned above the category of British Protected Persons as distinct from British subjects; and we may add that in some parts of the world such people provide the consul with a lot of very difficult and arduous work. Many of them have not a word of English, and the consul must try to check their claims to British protection on the evidence of torn and battered documents of a sort that might well defeat a specialist in oriental manuscripts. This, of course, is no fault of theirs. But some of them (we would not for worlds be thought to disparage them as a whole) belong to races with a veritable passion for intrigue and litigation; and often their requests for British protection are made only after they have been living—and conducting lawsuits—for years as people indistinguishable from the local population.

But most of a consul's work is of very real interest and has—unlike the diplomatist's labours—a quality of short-term positiveness that brings its own reward. A consul may sometimes envy the larger and grander scale of diplomatic activity, its greater *panache*. But he has the compensating satisfaction of being able to help many deserving people as individuals; and also of getting a lot of lesser

things done quickly that are useful and necessary, without the slowly-grinding processes and endless precautionary formalities of international high politics. It is small wonder that in the days when he could only observe diplomacy from the outside he sometimes thought of himself as the practical, down-to-earth worker and of his rather aloof diplomatic cousin as a mere representative of Savile Row. Nowadays he has no longer any excuse for harbouring such illusions; but it is an at least equally valuable consequence of the amalgamation that the diplomatist for his part gets first-hand experience of consular work in all its complexity, and comes thus to appreciate more fully than he could in the past its great importance in the scheme of Foreign Service representation as a whole.



## CHAPTER VIII

### *Delegations to International Bodies*

THE introductory remarks to the last chapter are even more applicable to the present one, which can accordingly be short. A consular establishment differs in point of official category from a normal diplomatic mission, though the work it does may be similar to a mission's in many ways. A delegation to an international body, on the other hand, is considered to be a variant within the category which embraces normal diplomatic missions—it is, in fact, a particular type of mission, not merely something rather like one.

The criterion for these distinctions is function. Consular and diplomatic functions really are different in kind, as we have already seen, despite their numerous points of resemblance; whereas the functions performed at normal missions and those performed at delegations are generally held to be varieties of the same thing, in that they are equally diplomatic<sup>1</sup> though differently specialised. Hence to be transferred from (say) the post of second secretary at an embassy of average size to that of consul in the Consulate-General at New York would probably be felt by the average Foreign Service officer of that hierarchical level to be much more of a change of job—for all it is quite a normal type of move in the present amalgamated Service—than to be transferred to the Permanent Delegation to the United Nations in New York. Quite possibly the first of these two moves would mean a less radical change in the subject-matter of the officer's work. It almost certainly would, for example, if he had been dealing with commercial questions at the embassy. But any two diplomatic posts, however much the subject-matter of their work may differ, have a great deal in common as regards the technique and professional 'modalities': diplomacy covers a very wide range of activities and interests, but there is a basic uniformity about its methods. And because of this uniformity the internal organisation of delegations differs hardly at all from that of ordinary diplomatic missions.

The foregoing refers of course to the diplomatic and consular norms, not to special and borderline cases such as that of the

<sup>1</sup> In a later chapter there will be something to say in qualification of this opinion; but for the present purposes it may be taken as holding the field and officially accepted.

political consulates mentioned in the last chapter. For example—and for obvious reasons it is expedient that the example should be taken from the vanished past—there used to be a very great similarity, even in the modalities, between the work done at our normal diplomatic missions in some Asiatic capitals and that done at the former consulate-general at Kashgar—a similarity probably greater, indeed, than that between the modalities of present-day work at the Washington embassy and at the New York permanent delegation. But the reason is simply that the old consulate-general at Kashgar (we have nothing there now) was for most purposes a minor legation in all but name, the long succession of former provincial authorities in Sinkiang having one and all asserted a large though varying measure of *de facto* independence.

Here, however, we are concerned with the normal state of things, not with exceptions. Such as it is, the difference between the pattern of life and work at missions and at delegations is mainly due, of course, to the difference of accreditation. A Foreign Service Officer employed abroad in a diplomatic capacity, whether at a mission or at a delegation, performs most of his work by contact and negotiation with a restricted group of professional diplomatists (and others who have temporarily assumed a diplomatic rôle). If his work is the maintenance of relations with a particular foreign country, the diplomatists of the ministry of foreign affairs will naturally loom largest for him within this group; for it is they whom he is chiefly employed to treat with, though his dealings with his foreign colleagues of the diplomatic corps are liable to be extensive in an age when exclusively bilateral relationships are becoming increasingly rare. If his work is with an international organisation, the element most nearly resembling the ministry of foreign affairs of ordinary diplomacy will be the secretariat of that organisation. But the resemblance is not very great and largely superficial. The secretariat does indeed constitute a central, directional point in the rather confusing pattern of multilateral negotiations. Like the ministry of foreign affairs, it is the fixed and permanent element in an otherwise constantly changing scene. And since it tends for this reason to have the same sort of influence and personality as an established civil service, it is very necessary in practice to keep on good terms with it. But it is in no sense a national host. Nor is it an arbiter; it takes no decisions. At the meetings of international bodies there is in fact no real equivalent of the national host of ordinary diplomacy; and herein lies the most essential difference both of form and of substance. Though the game must be played on somebody's land, it is not played in a genuinely national setting.

Apart from considerations of practical convenience—of transport facilities, available accommodation and the like—it is a matter of indifference where the members of an international body may, by agreement amongst themselves, decide to hold their deliberations. The Security Council or the General Assembly of the United Nations can meet equally well in the territory of any member nation, and both have met before now in countries other than the U.S.A.; the North Atlantic Council can be convened, and has on occasion been convened, in other cities than Paris; and so on. Wherever an international body does decide to meet, the national representatives comprising it form between them a self-contained and quasi-independent organisation. They are independent, that is, in the sense that in their official work they look inwards towards one another, not outwards towards a national focus beyond their own circle. They are severally accredited to something which they collectively constitute, not to something outside themselves.<sup>1</sup>

This is not, of course, to say that any international body is, or ever could be, completely unaffected by the fact of its meeting in one country rather than another. On the contrary, the influence of environment is always and inevitably considerable. (And 'inevitably' should not be taken to mean 'regrettably'.) Though the General Assembly of the United Nations, for example, stands in no special political relationship with the United States Government by reason of the fact that at present it meets in their territory, and though the United States Permanent Delegation at New York is thus on precisely the same footing as any other delegation, it would be inconceivable that the American atmosphere should not make itself largely felt. At every international organisation, indeed, the component delegations enjoy a great deal of social intercourse with people extraneous to their own official sphere, their members being accorded all the personal privileges and courtesies of the normal diplomatic life.

It is not easy to generalise further about the life and work at delegations to international bodies; for although their internal organisation is practically uniform owing to the specifically diplomatic quality which they possess in common with ordinary missions, they show in other respects a diversity corresponding to that of the various international bodies themselves. The United Nations, for example, differs markedly from other international bodies in that

<sup>1</sup> There is, however, one international body—the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community—to which, technically speaking, these generalisations are not wholly applicable. We shall refer to it again presently.

nearly all its debates are held in public. (Committees can indeed meet in closed session, and occasionally do, but most of the deliberations of the United Nations can be attended by anybody.)

Permanent United Kingdom delegations responsible to the Foreign Secretary are at present accredited to the following international bodies: The United Nations (there are two separate delegations, at New York and Geneva); the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation at Paris; the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation at Paris; the Brussels Treaty Organisation; and the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community at Luxembourg.

In point of technical status the last-named of the five delegations is different from the others, for the body to which it is accredited is unique. The High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community is the executive organ of the first supranational community ever to come into existence; and our permanent delegation at Luxembourg is thus accredited, like any normal diplomatic mission, to a foreign sovereign entity. The entity is composite, indeed, but it is none the less sovereign in its own sphere. There is, in fact, a form of 'national host' in this exceptional case, and the body of which our delegation forms part is orientated to something outside itself. In the nature of its work, on the other hand, the delegation at Luxembourg resembles other delegations to international bodies rather than ordinary diplomatic missions, for the work of the High Authority itself is restricted to those technical subjects in which sovereignty has been surrendered to it by the member governments comprising the community.

In pattern and rhythm, the work of the two delegations at Paris differs from that of the others. The Organisation for European Economic Co-operation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation are in continuous session, and the pressure of their work therefore remains fairly constant, though it is true that there are special spurts when, at irregular intervals, their councils meet at the ministerial level. With the exception of the Security Council, on the other hand, the organs of the United Nations meet at regular and fixed intervals, and so does the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community; hence a much more accentuated seasonal rhythm.

There is no permanent United Kingdom delegation to the Council of Europe at Strasbourg, but Her Majesty's Consul-General there holds the personal rank of United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe, and in this capacity his functions are broadly those of the head of a small-scale permanent delegation. He represents Her Majesty's Government at the meet-

ings of the Ministers' Deputies, which take place once in every six weeks or so.

In the Brussels Treaty Organisation the senior organ is the Consultative Council which consists of the Foreign Ministers of the Five Powers. The Council meets about twice a year, and when it is not in session the Permanent Commission acts on its behalf. The Commission consists of representatives of ambassadorial rank of the five countries, and meets regularly at the permanent headquarters of the Organisation in London. The United Kingdom representative is a Deputy Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office with the personal rank of Ambassador.

Because of the great similarity of internal organisation at missions and delegations, a Foreign Service Officer can go from the one type of post to the other without feeling that he has lost his bearings. On the sixty-first floor of the Empire State Building at New York, for example, where our delegation has its chancery and other business offices, the general procedure and office arrangements are very similar indeed to those at an ordinary, down-to-earth diplomatic mission which works in a less rarified atmosphere.

If one compares broadly the work at missions and at delegations, the main difference that emerges is the overwhelming preponderance, at the latter, of the negotiating function. It is true that normal diplomatic missions exist primarily in order to negotiate whenever the need arises—the fundamental characteristic of all diplomacy is negotiation. It is also true that in these fast-moving times most missions are called upon to negotiate a great deal. But, as we have seen elsewhere, they are maintained for various other purposes also—notably for formal, national representation, and for general reporting on developments in the countries in which they operate. Representation takes up quite a lot of time; and the field of study for reporting is extremely wide however small and relatively unimportant the country may be. Delegations, on the other hand, are maintained almost solely for negotiation. They perform this function nearly all the time, and usually at very high pressure. Their official representational duties, though by no means negligible, are slight by comparison with those of normal missions. And officially they have nothing to study and report upon save the business of the organisations to which they belong. For them, as has been said before, there is no official focus of attention, or gravitational force, outside the working body of which they themselves form part.

The negotiating function at a delegation tends moreover to be different in kind. In its official form it is exclusively of the round-table, oral sort; and it is still both oral and essentially multilateral even in its less official forms of off-the-record discussion and

lobbying.<sup>1</sup> The difference here is really one of degree only, but it is wide for all that. A mission's negotiating task, though not exclusively bilateral in character, is largely so: for most purposes the mission is simply a link between two ministries of foreign affairs. Since nowadays so few questions are of concern to two nations only, the head of a mission does indeed very often consult and concert with his foreign diplomatic colleagues (and more often still, of course, with his Commonwealth colleagues) in the process of negotiating with the minister for foreign affairs. It is fairly seldom, however, that he and his colleagues negotiate all together *with* the minister, sitting round a table. Most foreign ministers, however much addicted they may be to participation in round-table conferences which involve foreign travel, naturally prefer when they are at home to be approached by each foreign representative singly and in turn. There are occasions, of course, when two or more Heads of Mission in a capital make a concerted approach to the Foreign Minister, for example when delivering identical diplomatic notes. But such a procedure, although becoming increasingly common, especially in the conduct of relations between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union, is still the exception rather than the rule. In short, then, the normal pattern in the national setting is for all lines to converge on the ministry of foreign affairs from ostensibly unconnected peripheral points, and for no two lines to carry traffic simultaneously. And this means negotiating procedures markedly different from that of the round table.

Again, though quite a lot of a normal mission's negotiating work may be done orally—especially in those countries where contact is easy by reason both of friendly relations and of a shared high level of professional integrity—written communications of various degrees of formality always play a considerable part. At delegations it is rather different. They have indeed plenty of paper work of more than one sort. They must draft many committee reports and resolutions; and they are in constant correspondence with their own government—oral discussions must of course be fully summarised; analyses and recommendations have to be clearly and concisely set forth; and so on. But drafting work of these kinds, though never easy, is at least straightforward by comparison with the technique of bilateral diplomatic correspondence. There is, in particular, less need to resort to the somewhat elaborate urbanities commonly known as frills. (Incidentally it is easy enough to make fun of these frills, but in point of fact they are made necessary by,

<sup>1</sup> The continued need for these things will be explained in Chapter 10.

and belong naturally to, that pleasant and fruitful host-guest relationship of normal diplomacy to which allusion has been made elsewhere.)

One result of the difference in kind and, greater volume of negotiating work for the officer serving at a delegation to an international body is that he gets to know the diplomatic circle in which he moves far better than his counterpart at a normal mission can ever hope to know his. It does, to be sure, promote intimacy and fellow-feeling among the members of a diplomatic corps to have shared the local representational life in all its pleasures and rigours. Nevertheless these shared experiences are merely incidental to a life spent largely in separate offices. The member of a delegation, on the other hand, is with the other members of his diplomatic 'club' day in, day out—in the long battles of argument, and in the friendly atmosphere of informal social intercourse. He cannot fail to acquire wide experience in what is perhaps the most characteristic element of the diplomatic technique—oral discussion—and also much insight into a great diversity of national attitudes and mentalities.

The officer at a delegation also gets more experience of public speaking than any member of an ordinary diplomatic mission with the possible exception of its head. The more senior members of delegations to international organisations are often called upon to speak at the meetings of these bodies as the representatives of their respective governments. The more junior members also attend the meetings and thus incidentally acquire, as understudies, indirect experience of public debate. They are there to help their seniors in various ways: for instance, by maintaining unofficial contact, during the official discussions, with the other delegations present; and by obtaining advice for their own teams on points of law, procedure and fact.

For all these reasons, though no one type of Foreign Service work can provide a perfectly-balanced, all-round diplomatic education, the permanent delegations are probably the best training schools that exist.

The work at delegations is in some ways more arduous than that at missions, in other ways rather less so. Nothing is so tiring as prolonged multilateral negotiation round a table. On the other hand a delegation's work ceases (theoretically) when the particular meetings with which it is concerned have come to an end; whereas the member of an ordinary embassy can never stop trying to learn about the country in which he is stationed and to increase the range of his personal contacts with its inhabitants.

Some people with inside knowledge would probably say that the

work at an international delegation is more inspiring, because more constructive, than that at a normal mission. It is not certain that this really is so, but it does often seem so. Undoubtedly at international bodies the prevailing atmosphere is usually one of disinterested activity. A great deal of discussion, often fruitful, is always going on between delegates who have no national axes to grind and are concerned solely to promote general harmony and progress. There is, in fact, a feeling of busy altruism in the air; and this feeling is certainly less noticeable in most negotiations and discussions of the bilateral diplomatic sort.

It would indeed be wrong to suggest that bilateral diplomatic negotiation is always a grim tug-of-war between conflicting interests and points of view. On the contrary, an almost complete basis of agreement often exists from the outset, owing to the identity of interests between the two nations in the matter discussed; and the negotiations then consist merely of concerting the form and details of collaboration in a willingly-shared enterprise. (We say 'merely', but in fact such work can often be very laborious as well as important). Again, bilateral negotiation too is quite often concerned with the adjustment of differences and disputes between third powers. For that matter, the reconciliation of one's own interests with those of somebody else is of course constructive work in a very real sense. Nevertheless bilateral negotiations do inevitably tend in the main to take the form of strenuous tussling, since the surfaces of contact between even the best-disposed pair of states cannot fail to produce a certain amount of friction at times. And whenever such tussles do occur, the diplomatist working in the normal setting is always, of course, an interested party trying to defend his own, never a go-between striving selflessly to adjust the differences of others. Hence in most of his work he has probably less of the uplifting sensation of beneficent creativeness than his counterpart at a delegation. It is true that the bulk of all diplomacy, multilateral as well as bilateral, is cobbling rather than creation. (The reason why it is nevertheless entitled to be called constructive is simply that it militates against the destructive forces of disharmony and war, and makes cracked or cracking things sound again). Existing troubles have to be patched up somehow with whatever scraps of material there may be to hand, and little remains as a rule for the really untrammelled imagination to work upon. But in the wider setting of international gatherings, where many cobblers are assembled and work together at adjacent lasts, one does inevitably get a greater impression of positive accomplishment for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

In the last analysis, the question turns on the suitability of the word 'altruism' in this context. In a world where peace is usually



said to be indivisible, it can reasonably be argued that it is no more—or at any rate not much more—altruistic to try to compose the differences of others than to strive for the adjustment of differences directly affecting oneself. But however that may be, and whether the old argument holds water or not, the fact remains that the average member of the Foreign Service at international delegations does feel inspired by the sense of contributing, in an often disinterested way, towards the progress and harmony of the world in general. And even if the feeling is not wholly logical it is a good feeling to have, a sort of adrenalin secretion for minds that must often be driven over-hard.

A delegation does not have as much representational work as a normal mission. What work it does have of this kind is also a good deal less ceremonious. The officer appointed to a delegation can leave his impressive but rather uncomfortable uniform behind. And, although there will be plenty of entertaining of a more or less formal sort, he will not have to cultivate the special art of being a satisfied and satisfying official guest, for there will be no official national host. The purely social type of limelight will be found less strong than at an embassy. Unlike his embassy counterpart, on the other hand, he will be exposed to a most daunting publicity in the performance of some of his workaday tasks. At meetings in which he speaks as his government's representative the blinding lights of the press photographers and television men will be apt to fall on him at the most embarrassing moments—and not by mere accident; for it is one of the oddities of present-day life that a picture of an official delegate indulging in a desperate yawn, or merely blinking owlishly, has first-rate news value. Not only his set speeches, but also his impromptu contributions to public debate in the international forum, are liable on occasion to be recorded on the magnetic tape with every 'hum' and 'er', both for immediate reproduction by broadcasting stations throughout the world and for the enlightenment of remotest posterity. He will need, therefore, at least as much poise and presence of mind as his counterpart in an ordinary diplomatic mission, though for slightly different reasons. But most of all, in this special line of diplomatic country, he will need the particular combination of urbanity, quickwittedness and toughness in debate that characterises the good parliamentarian; for the organisations on which he will serve are in some sort international parliaments. All diplomatists, of course, need these qualities, but he needs them most of all.

## CHAPTER IX

### *Life and Work at the Foreign Office*

A FORMER United States ambassador to the Soviet Union maintained in the Baltic a yacht which, according to irreverent American journalists, was so big that its lifeboats had to have lifeboats of their own. There are some structures of interdepartmental co-ordination which appear to suffer from a like defect. And it must be admitted that, to the outside observer with a healthy disinclination to take bureaucracy too much on trust, the Foreign Office itself might seem to afford an illustration of the depressing dictum that liaison breeds liaison. The Office is a very small organisation when seen against the yardstick of the work it performs, for the efficient handling of British relations with the outside world in the present uneasy phase of international life is unquestionably a task of great complexity. But to the outsider or newcomer it must nevertheless seem a most formidable piece of bureaucratic machinery.

If it is so, this is due in the main to the development of its function of advising the Foreign Secretary as distinct from that of merely acting as a link between him and Her Majesty's Representatives abroad. This advisory function is comparatively new. The incoming outgoing threads of official business have always, of course, passed through the Foreign Office machine; but it is only in quite recent times that they began to be at all extensively "manipulated" in the machine itself. Hardly as much as two generations ago the functions of the Department were different and much less important. The threads of foreign affairs radiated outwards from the external side of the machine, but within the machine very little happened beyond mere canalisation: almost all the threads passed straight through it to the Foreign Secretary himself. He it was who dealt personally with all but the least important of the problems of action abroad, and with most of what needed to be done in the way of consultation and co-ordination at home. The British representatives abroad offered advice as well as supplying facts; but the Foreign Office itself had only a very small part to play, by comparison with our own times, in the formulation of policy, for it was not recognised as having any advisory duties. It was, in fact, little more than the Secretary of State's clerical organisation. There was, of course, much copying, cyphering and filing to be done. But of drafting (which appertains essentially to the advisory rôle) there was very

little by modern standards. Sir John Tulley records that when he joined the Foreign Office in 1893 the register of the Eastern Department was still kept by what we should now call an officer of Branch A of twelve years' service. Lord Salisbury never consulted his Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Philip Currie, on any matter of importance, did much of his work at home, and on occasion kept his transactions with other Governments completely secret from the Foreign Office. Sir Thomas Sanderson, who succeeded Currie as Permanent Under-Secretary, did not regard it as incumbent on him, or indeed proper for him, to volunteer advice on policy to his Minister.

The modern conception of the Foreign Office as a body of experts with advisory duties evolved very slowly. Changes in the internal organisation and in the methods of recruitment were going on all through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but there was no great acceleration before the first world war. It was within the lifetime of men still employed in the Foreign Service that the home Department emerged fully from clerkly bondage into its present status as an advisory body. Senior members of the Office had for long been pressing to be allowed to take a real hand in the conduct of foreign relations as people having expert knowledge. The sudden and steep rise in the pressure of business from the turn of the century onwards made it absolutely essential that they should do so. But they might well have been allowed to do so earlier, for the change was long overdue when it came. Already towards the end of the nineteenth century foreign secretaries were beginning to find the strain too great; and nowadays, of course, it would be unthinkable that any man should attempt to cope with this country's foreign business with the help of clerical assistants only.

The structure of departmental authority remains pyramidal, with the Foreign Secretary at the apex as its unquestioned master; but, as things now are, he needs the help of many brains—and tongues—as well as the labour of many hands. As explained at the beginning of this book, the present advisory function of the Foreign Service generally, and of the Foreign Office in particular, does not mean that the servants of the State who comprise these bodies have arrogated to themselves the rôle of creators of policy. Their advice need never be followed, and sometimes is not: it is merely a thing available and of some intrinsic value, representing a body of opinion of some weight, hence in practice an influence on those who do create policy. Nevertheless it must, as an influence, acquire an ever-growing importance so long as those factors continue to grow that originally brought it into being—the volume, complexity and importance to our country of international relations. People who see in the

general growth of State control a trend away from true democracy will descry this trend also in the growth of Foreign Office influence over policy; and they may well be right. Perhaps this is merely one illustration of the quite arguable theory that genuine democracy can exist only where the entity concerned is small and the governmental apparatus correspondingly simple. But however that may be, and whether it be for better or for worse, the Foreign Office cannot avoid playing an ever more important advisory rôle as time goes on.

If the Office is to tender sound advice to the Secretary of State it must think hard and wisely, in the light of its own acquired knowledge and experience, about the factual reports and accompanying recommendations that pour in from the British representatives abroad. But thinking *in vacuo* is not enough. It must also consult with all those institutions at home, governmental and other, that are concerned directly or indirectly with foreign affairs. There must in fact be full contact with the mechanism of internal government, and with many other internal institutions, at various levels. Nowadays, foreign and home affairs are closely interdependent, and a great many acts of foreign policy are the product of consultation between the Foreign Office and other interested Departments of State. Similarly, in a number of fields domestic policy may affect our relations with foreign countries and therefore require Foreign Office assent. In consequence, the Foreign Office spends much of its time consulting, and being consulted by, the Home Departments. Where several Departments are concerned, for example when a trade agreement is to be negotiated, this process usually takes place in official interdepartmental committees, and it is here that the often conflicting interests of Departments must be resolved, if possible—a task which may well call for hard, and sometimes heated, negotiation. Ultimately, a policy agreed in this way at the official level may be important enough to require consideration by the Cabinet or a Cabinet Committee; and there the Foreign Secretary or his deputy may have to go through the same process of consultation, and perhaps argument, with those of his colleagues whose Departments' interests are at stake, before the policy can be adopted. All this calls for a great deal of preparatory work in the Foreign Office. For example, at each level at which interdepartmental discussion takes place the Foreign Office representative must be briefed, and his brief may often have to represent the agreed view of several interested Departments within the Office. Even in its more traditional rôle as a retailer and analyst of reports from posts abroad, the Foreign Office has to bear constantly in mind the effect of foreign developments on affairs in this country and see that its information reaches all the other Government Departments who

may be interested. This inter-relationship between home and foreign affairs means that the Foreign Office, although it serves only one master, the Foreign Secretary, must conduct its business before the critical gaze of all Whitehall.

From what has been said above it will be apparent that the work of an officer of the administrative branch of the Service in the Foreign Office, though concerned with broadly the same problems as those dealt with by the Foreign Service officer abroad, is usually much more complicated in its actual mechanism. The work abroad may at times be very difficult to perform; but its pattern, and the channels in which it runs, are relatively straightforward. A diplomatic representative, as we have seen, deals officially with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only. So far as positive negotiation is concerned, therefore, he is simply the middleman between two foreign ministries geographically separated. He knows what his own department at home wants him to get; and although the getting of it may be exceedingly difficult, at least he is in no doubt about where to go for it. He stands on a straight and hedged road, with the Foreign Office far behind him and the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately ahead. It is not his business to worry about whether the achieving of what he has to do will prove administratively awkward for some ministry at home other than the Foreign Office, or politically displeasing to certain factions in Parliament, or liable to cause complications with other influential groups of people, British or 'third-party foreign'. He will of course take an intelligent interest in all these possible repercussions, but meanwhile he will go on travelling his allotted road. He has indeed to consider carefully, and advise upon, a broadly similar array of complications liable to arise in the country where he serves as a result of British foreign policies; and this may often necessitate discreet and unofficial soundings in various quarters. But such soundings can never be pushed to the point of even the most tentative negotiation. He can throw a fly over a Minister of Commerce (or a Cardinal Archbishop, or a trade union leader, or an influential politician out of office) about some current problem when he meets these people in the course of his social activities. But he must be extremely careful how he does it; and he can never go to any of them with the draft of an agreement in his hand and a proposal to thresh the matter out provisionally. As a negotiator, in fact, he has a strictly circumscribed field of action.

Not so the Foreign Office official. He, as we have seen, stands at the meeting-point of many ways. Most of these are official ways; and it is not of course suggested for a moment that it is his business (for example) to go direct to the General Secretary of the T.U.C. in order

to discuss the probable effect on British working-class opinion of some hypothetical British action in the domain of foreign affairs. It is, however, his duty to consider *all* the likely results, both internal and external, of the foreign policies about which he tenders advice; and the whole of the internal governmental apparatus is accessible to him for those exploratory investigations on which his own conclusions must largely depend.

Let us suppose, for example, that a civil air agreement has to be negotiated with a certain foreign country, within the general framework of the relevant international conventions. Her Majesty's embassy in that country has given—probably in semi-official Chancery letters—its own forecast of the various points on which the foreign government will try to drive a hard bargain. Acceptance of some of these points may be impossible because it would preclude British air lines from operating in that country at a reasonable profit. But unless agreement can be reached there may be other and worse troubles; and nobody can be quite clear about the possibilities of compromise without sounding the British corporations and companies concerned. The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation is the natural channel for such soundings. That Ministry will also, of course, have views of its own about the concessions to be demanded on the British side; and our embassy may consider that insistence on some of these would, similarly, lead to a deadlock. A great deal of correspondence with the embassy, and of more or less informal discussions in London at the middle levels of officialdom, will probably have to take place before there is any question of preparing an official draft agreement for presentation to the foreign government. Probably too the subsequent processes of official negotiation and hard bargaining with that government will continue to be directed from the middle departmental strata in London. Only at the very end of this long chain of action, when both national parties are ready at the departmental level to sign an agreed text, will the matter break surface at the ministerial level. There will then be various further processes to be got through—matters chiefly of form, but also in some cases of substance.—An international agreement may, and very often will, contain a clause providing that its entry into force is subject to ratification; in which case the text will usually, and as a matter of custom,<sup>1</sup> be laid before Parliament in order to make it possible for its contents to be debated. (And similar procedures may be required in the foreign country concerned.) In any case its contents will be made known, and the Foreign Secretary will have to be briefed to answer parliamentary questions about it. Again, what are known as

<sup>1</sup> Not, however, as a matter of constitutional right: the prerogative of ratification is vested in the Crown.

full powers' must be prepared before signature of the agreement can take place. And so on. But the entire work of negotiating the international instrument will have been done by members of the Home Civil Service and the Foreign Service, on their own initiative and on the basis of delegated responsibility. The volume of international business is nowadays so vast that there is no practical alternative to such initiation of action by government servants, whether or not parliamentary approval be ultimately sought for the results.

The advisory function of the Foreign Office (with its concomitants of internal liaison and spontaneous negotiation, external and internal) has been dwelt on at some length not only because it is in fact the main function, but also because it is well to state clearly how much rope the Department has, and why. To the general reader with an interest in the implications of governmental practice for democracy, these are no doubt the main questions. He has no great difficulty in understanding why the Foreign Service abroad has a positive part to play in the carrying out of policy, for the employment of professional intermediaries vested with discretionary powers is obviously made necessary by distance alone. But must the Foreign Office itself, which is within hail of the elected makers of policy, trespass beyond the rôle of mere transmitting agent? As we have seen, it must; and the reason is simply that there is so much to do.

The function of the Office in the domain of external negotiation is, as stated at the beginning of this book, twofold. It uses the British missions abroad as its long-range instruments, but it also conducts business direct with the foreign missions in London, since all diplomacy is organised on a reciprocal basis. There is no hard and fast rule governing the division of business between the one channel and the other, but in general it is true to say that external negotiation in London occurs chiefly when the initiative is taken by the foreign government concerned. And this, it will be seen on reflection, is natural enough. The Foreign Office has in general a great regard for the capacity of the foreign representatives accredited to this country; but it also thinks highly of the capacities of its own people abroad, and inevitably knows much more about them. Moreover the conduct of relations between governments is always subject to certain mechanical difficulties: the means of communication are still far from perfect, and are liable to give rise to complications and misunderstandings even when the greatest care is exercised. Particularly is this so of telegrams which are sent in cypher—as, for obvious reasons, they must normally be. We ourselves nowadays employ highly-trained and very efficient cypher staffs, but even with us the complicated processes of cryptography are liable to give trouble at times. There is, in fact, no complete safeguard against

misunderstandings due to faults in the mechanical processes of transmission; but by using one's own mechanism one is at least able to reduce the risks to the minimum.

For these reasons alone it would be natural that Her Majesty's Government should in general prefer to employ their own emissaries abroad for negotiations initiated by themselves. But there is another and no less practical reason: negotiation takes time; and although the British representatives abroad are busy people, they are not usually as over-worked as the Secretary of State himself. (Negotiation in London does not, of course, save any paper work by eliminating the need for the reporting process, since our representatives in the countries concerned must be kept fully informed of developments at home if confusion and cross-purposes are to be avoided.)

Diplomacy being reciprocally organised, if all foreign governments were influenced in like degree by these general considerations there would be approximate parity between the direct negotiating work done by the Foreign Office with the Diplomatic Corps in London and the indirect negotiating work that it does through the intermediary of British representatives abroad. In point of fact there is no such parity: normally, much more intergovernmental negotiation involving the United Kingdom as one of the parties is done abroad than at home. This may in part reflect the high reputation undoubtedly enjoyed in all quarters by Her Majesty's representatives as reliable intermediaries, but probably the mechanical factors also count for much: great powers such as ourselves are known to possess a physical apparatus of communications which is above the average of efficiency.

A summary of the different types of work done by the Foreign Office was attempted in Chapter I, and it is not proposed to give here anything in the nature of a room-to-room guide *à la Baedeker*, for this book is concerned with broad outlines and general principles only. Nevertheless it may be appropriate to say something at this point about the structure of authority in the Office and about the main categories into which its various departments fall. (The sub-sections of the Foreign Office are, as already explained, called 'departments', whereas those of the other Departments of State are known as 'divisions'.)

As with all other Departments of State, the Foreign Office is ruled by someone who is not a civil servant. The Foreign Secretary is its chief by virtue of his position as a member of the Government, and represents in his own person the powers of the Parliamentary majority of the day in the domain of foreign affairs. His rule is of course bounded in time by that of the Parliamentary majority, but



is absolute while it lasts. Associated with him (at present, that is: the arrangements vary slightly from time to time in accordance with passing needs) are four parliamentary assistants, who work with him inside the Office when they are not helping him in the two Houses or deputising for him abroad at international conferences and the like. Within the Foreign Office each of them specialises in certain questions, though their handling of such questions does not prejudice the sole responsibility of the Secretary of State for the conduct of the business of the Office, or the right of the Permanent Under-Secretary to have direct access to the Secretary of State on all matters of concern to the Foreign Office. They are the two Ministers of State, one of whom is in the House of Commons and the other in the House of Lords, and the two Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State, both in the House of Commons. In addition, both the Secretary of State and the Minister of State (in the House of Commons) have Parliamentary Private Secretaries who are members of the House of Commons. These seven people form the parliamentary element within the Office.

The rest of the Office staff consists mainly of regular members of the Foreign Service (reinforced, however, as we have seen in Chapter III, by various kinds of non-Service personnel). At their head stands the Permanent<sup>1</sup> Under-Secretary of State, who is the Foreign Secretary's chief adviser and is the head of the Foreign Service. He has to be ready to advise the Secretary of State on any current question of importance, and to receive foreign Ambassadors on his behalf. He is responsible to him for the good administration of the Foreign Service and, on the advice of the Senior Promotions Board of which he is chairman, makes recommendations to him on all senior appointments and promotions. As Accounting Officer he is personally responsible to Parliament through the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons for seeing that the moneys voted by Parliament for the Foreign Service are expended with due economy for the purposes for which they were voted, and no others. His work is arduous, exacting and exhilarating. Below him the chain of command is rather complicated, and can best be understood by studying the diagram at Appendix I on pages 204 and 205. Here we shall merely call attention to a few of the more salient points.

<sup>1</sup> The official use of the word 'permanent' in this connexion is perhaps somewhat misleading, with its suggestion of hoary and impregnable bureaucracy. There is of course nothing permanent about the tenure of the office so far as the individual incumbent is concerned—he rarely holds it for more than four or five years at the end of his career. But the word serves to indicate that the office, being held by the equivalent of a civil servant as distinct from a politician, is unaffected by parliamentary changes or at least not necessarily affected by them.

The basic functional units of the Foreign Office are the departments; of which, as we have seen, there are at present thirty-eight. Those departments not engaged in technical work connected with the administration of the Office and Service are staffed chiefly by officers of Branch A, with a counsellor in charge and a number of first, second and third secretaries to assist him—the number varies greatly, but is about seven on the average. In the administrative departments the number of officers employed is usually much higher, with Branch B personnel predominating.

In the most normal pattern of the chain of command there are Under-Secretaries of State interposed between the heads of departments and the Permanent Under-Secretary of State. At present there are three Deputy Under-Secretaries and nine Assistant Under-Secretaries. In hierarchical theory the Deputy Under-Secretaries are simply the most senior members of a rank which comprises both them and the Assistant Under-Secretaries, not a rank interposed between the latter and the Permanent Under-Secretary. Each of the Under-Secretaries has a group of departments to supervise, and the Deputy Under-Secretaries may in addition be charged with special responsibilities in relation to interdepartmental standing committees, over which in some cases they preside. But there are many variants of this normal chain of command. As will be seen from the diagram at Appendix I, for example, the Permanent Under-Secretary himself supervises the Research Department and Library and the News Department. He also directly supervises the Legal Advisers (who are, incidentally, very much more important in the general scheme of things than their position in the diagram might suggest to the uninitiated—there will be more to say about them later).

The Deputy and Assistant Under-Secretaries occupy a key position in the hierarchy of the Foreign Office. It is they, in consultation with their heads of departments, who evolve and formulate and recommend courses of action and lines of major policy on the basis of general directions from the Secretary of State, or in the light of what is known to be his general outlook, or on the strength of what, in their judgment, would best meet the public interest. In this they keep in closest touch with the Permanent Under-Secretary and, in principle, put up their papers through him. But this is often not possible, since the Permanent Under-Secretary has to attend to questions of administration as well as to questions of policy and has many calls on his time and attention. For this reason, Under-Secretaries in practice often send papers direct to the Secretary of State, with copies to the Permanent Under-Secretary. This makes for flexibility of procedure and for expedition in the conduct of business. In recent years it has been the frequent practice to appoint young and

active men to Under-Secretarial posts. This has served most effectively to ease the burden falling upon those at the top.

The junior members of each department (collectively known in the Service as the department's 'Third Room' because they usually work together in one large office, whereas the head of the department and his chief assistant have rooms to themselves) constitute the lowest level in the administrative part of the mechanism. Normally it is here that all those processes originate which relate to the advisory function of the Office as described above. The Third Room of the department makes the first suggestions, in the form of minutes concerning the action to be taken on incoming papers. Sometimes, however, it does so only after taking, on its own initiative, some form of preliminary action such as consultation with other Departments of State. It may be, for example, that the incoming paper consists of a despatch from one of our embassies in a foreign country describing some new problem that has arisen there. The problem (let us suppose) is clearly of interest to the Colonial Office. The officer in the Third Room who deals with the affairs of the foreign country concerned may in that case submit the despatch to his superiors with a covering minute beginning: 'I have discussed this question provisionally with Mr. A. of the X Division of the Colonial Office in view of its implications for British administration in the Y Protectorate, and we both recommend that the following action should be taken. . . . ' If the matter is of comparatively small importance and he feels sure of his ground, he will at this same stage attach a draft reply to the embassy in the sense of his minute.

The despatch thus minuted, together with the draft reply, will then start on its way upwards through the hierarchy to the level at which the question can properly be decided. If it is of major importance it may go right up to the Secretary of State himself - with an accretion of minutes, and corresponding amendments to the draft, by each officer in the chain of command. But the duty of each of these officers is to reduce as far as may be, by a process of sieving, the burden on his immediate superior. Consequently if the question is not of major importance it will be decided at some intermediate level. The officer at that level will write the final minute on the jacket, indicating the action to be taken, and will initial the draft in its final form. The paper will then travel downwards through the hierarchy to the Third Room; and through it to the executive apparatus for fair-typing, signature and despatch by diplomatic bag, or for cyphering and despatch by telegraph, as the case may be.

There are of course many variants of the pattern of procedure described above. The draft reply accompanying the minutes may only be produced at a much higher level than that of the Third

Room—the denizens of which do not invariably think they know the answer. And often new drafts will replace the original one as the papers move upwards. At each level there may be, and often will be, consultation with the corresponding level of other Departments of State and with external institutions more generally. As has been said earlier in this chapter, the submission eventually reaching the Secretary of State (or the deciding authority below him in the hierarchy) may represent the final product of a great deal of correspondence with one or more of the missions abroad and of correspondence and oral discussion—including positive negotiation—with departmental and other institutions at home. Again, in particularly urgent matters there may be a considerable telescoping of the procedure described: an incoming telegram of high priority, received in its virgin jacket by the Third Room at ten o'clock in the morning, may within an hour or so be the subject of oral discussion by officers of various grades in the room of the Permanent Under-Secretary of State or of the Secretary of State himself, with the jacket still unminuted.

Another practice, designed to save the Secretary of State from having to wade through a long series of perhaps divergent and argumentative minutes, is now in constant application in the Foreign Office. If it is clear that a paper upon which a decision is required, or in which a significant development in the foreign field is disclosed, is important enough to go up to the Secretary of State, the sense of the minutes of the outcome of any oral departmental discussion will be consolidated by the head of Department or Under-Secretary into a single concise but comprehensive minute in which the relevant facts will be stated, the relevant considerations adduced and a course of action (if such is required), or alternative courses of action, recommended. Nevertheless the normal procedure of initial action by juniors in the various departments, and 'sieving' by each successive officer above their level in the hierarchy, is followed wherever possible; for only so can those at the top cope adequately with the really important items in the day's business. (It is probably true to say that as much as eighty per cent. of all incoming papers are dealt with by the heads of departments without reference to higher authority; but the remaining twenty per cent. are sufficiently important and difficult to keep the more senior officers extremely busy.)

The normal procedure, moreover, has another advantage: the minuting system shows exactly how the question was dealt with at all stages—who gave what advice when, who took the responsibility of final action, and so on. And this is very necessary in view of the Secretary of State's ultimate responsibility to Parliament for all the

actions of his Department. In foreign affairs there are seemingly minor problems which have an uncomfortable way of developing overnight into major ones. The pressure of work is always so great that there is no possibility of guarding against this risk by confining decisions wholly to the top level; but for this very reason the evidence necessary for a *post mortem* must always be preserved. And this can only be ensured by an elaborate paper system of the sort that outsiders are wont to criticise as red tape. It certainly is rather cumbersome, but without it there would be no sure means of ascertaining who was responsible when things went wrong.

The normal procedure described above relates to what are known as the 'action' or 'substantive' copies of official correspondence. Nowadays it is usual, with most types of non-telegraphic official correspondence, to enclose several carbon copies for informatory distribution both inside and outside the Office; and there is a good deal of semi-official correspondence of various kinds and degrees of informality. Official telegrams are cyclostyled in the Office and circulated widely for the information of the administrative hierarchy—there are a number of classes of routine circulation, of varying degrees of comprehensiveness. Each Assistant Under-Secretary, for example, receives two or three times a day a locked despatch-box from the Communications Department containing a wide selection of copied inward and outward telegrams, and is thus able to keep abreast of current developments generally. Among these copies, of course, are those relating to his own particular sphere of work. If need be, therefore, he can short-circuit the slower, percolating process followed by the substantive copy. He can also keep an eye on the way in which minor questions relating to his own sphere are being disposed of by those below him.

But short-circuiting of the normal process must be kept within strict limits if confusion is to be avoided. And this applies also to the use of semi-official correspondence: it has its legitimate scope, but can easily be indulged in too much. For the average head of a mission, indeed, such over-indulgence is a standing temptation. If he expresses what he has to say in a semi-official letter, he knows that this letter will go straight to the man whose concurrence or enlightenment he is chiefly concerned to secure. No clerkly hands will delay its passage for filing, docketing and the other laborious processes of the official mill. No junior secretary in the department concerned will relegate it to his 'Pending' tray, or take the edge off its persuasiveness in the effort to produce an impressively judicious commentary. Above all, a more colloquial and perhaps more pungent style can be used than would be fitting in an official despatch. But most of such letters will have to be officially entered at some

stage; and if there are too many of them the recipients, always busy and working against time, will merely send them 'down' after a hasty and despairing glance, for entry and re-submission through the regular mill. Moreover to the extent to which semi-official letters are personal in style and aimed *ad hominem*, to that same extent will they tend to be awkward to handle in all those procedures, such as copying to other Departments of State, which the proper conduct of public business usually entails. There is a long tradition behind the present use of semi-official correspondence in the Foreign Service. From the late eighteenth century till well into the twentieth the method was certainly employed to excess. The modern tendency is to restrict its use progressively while not abandoning it altogether.

Though there are of course a number of shorthand-typists allocated individually to the departments and to officers above the departmental level, the bulk of the clerical and mechanical work is done jointly for the whole Office by three specialised departments—the Communications Department, the Archives Department, and the Secretarial and Production Services.<sup>1</sup> The second of these, however, is organised mainly on a functional basis corresponding in miniature to that of the departments as a whole: each of its 'correspondence divisions', that is, serves exclusively either one department or a group of two or three, 'feeding' it (or them) with incoming papers—in covering jackets ready for minuting, and with the relevant past correspondence attached—arranging for the fair-typing and despatch of its (or their) initialled drafts, and so on. These three 'general services' departments, together with others such as the Security Department, are ancillary, but of great importance in the scheme of things. Their members may be likened roughly to the engineers and stokers in a ship: they do not navigate, and are seldom to be seen above decks, but without their labours the ship would be helpless. No attempt will, however, be made to describe these labours in any detail: on the one hand, clerical and archival work is much the same everywhere; on the other, not a few of the technical functions of the Communications Department and the Security Department are obviously in the nature of trade secrets.

A categorisation of the Foreign Office departments according to the work they do was essayed in Chapter III, but it remains to describe the functions of certain elements of the Office which lie wholly or partly outside the departmental framework.

The Legal Adviser and his six assistants, though shown in Appendix I as apparently forming one of the forty departments,

<sup>1</sup> This last does not actually include the shorthand and typing staff of the Office; its duty is to control and supervise them.

do not strictly speaking constitute one, since they have no administrative or executive rôle. They do not, that is, correspond officially with the outside world, though they communicate semi-officially with the legal experts in other Departments of State and with the Law Officers of the Crown. Within the Office they give advice, chiefly in the form of departmental minutes, on all matters of law, English and international, and assist in the drafting of treaties and similar instruments. They also attend many international conferences as members of the United Kingdom delegations. And they are, of course, particularly to the fore whenever a case involving Her Majesty's Government comes before the International Court of Justice at The Hague. Since there is scarcely any item of international business that does not at some stage raise juridical problems and require the drafting of documents in correct legal phraseology, their rôle is of the greatest importance and its scope very wide indeed. The Legal Adviser himself ranks with the Deputy Under-Secretaries, and is therefore one of the five officials at the summit of the hierarchy. In many foreign countries all candidates for the diplomatic and consular careers are required to possess legal degrees of one kind or another. With us it is not so; and the principle behind our practice is simply that, as Pope declared, a little learning is a dangerous thing. Adequate competence in those questions of law that are most likely to arise in the course of international business requires a life-time of specialisation, and consequently the only safe procedure is to rely on the advice of real experts. Ours are professional lawyers, who work within the Foreign Office.<sup>1</sup>

The Corps of Inspectors is another body that lies largely outside the departmental scheme since its duties naturally involve much travelling abroad. The Senior Inspector and his five assistants try to visit between them all the principal diplomatic and consular posts once in every two or three years; and this means that, even in these days of rapid air travel, they are almost constantly on the move. At each post visited they have a wide range of matters to investigate: it includes questions of pay and allowances; the grading of staff; the organisation of the work with an eye to the most effective and economical use of manpower; accommodation; welfare; the training of junior staff; security arrangements; accounts; the operation of the official car pool; and a general enquiry into the proper execution of routine duties. It is largely on their recommendations, resulting from personal investigation on the spot, that local allowances are fixed in such a manner as to level out the

<sup>1</sup> There are also a few serving at the principal Diplomatic missions abroad.

practical effects for members of the Service of the enormous discrepancies in the cost of living throughout the world. In addition to all this, the Inspectors perform a personal liaison rôle by explaining the requirements of the Foreign Office to posts abroad and similarly explaining the needs and problems of each post to the Foreign Office. Such things can of course be done, within limits, by correspondence; but the part played by the Inspectors as personal intermediaries is none the less of the greatest value. They alone combine first-hand knowledge of the particular living conditions at innumerable individual posts abroad with a world-wide perspective of Service requirements generally. The truth is that what is known as 'the London end', as seen from the more distant outposts, can at times appear rather inhuman as well as merely remote. At such outposts one suspects, and not always without reason, that the financial and administrative pundits of Whitehall can never have known what it is to feel really hot or really cold, have never experienced the physical effects of prolonged work at high altitudes, have no conception of what public transport in some parts of the world is like, and so on. 'If only', one exclaims, 'they knew anything of the world beyond Maida Vale, and could see what we are up against on the spot!' This is just what the Inspectors do see; and they are sympathetic people. They are also financially hard-headed, for it is of the essence of their job to be so. But no Foreign Service officer minds that. What he wants is simply that the particular conditions of his work should be investigated intelligently and at first hand.

There is one member of the Foreign Office whose functions have not yet been described. That is the Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State. He is a senior member of the Service and his rôle is a very important one. He is the official most frequently in the company of the Secretary of State. It is his duty to be familiar as far as possible with all the current work of the Office. On the other hand, he must always be at pains to avoid short-circuiting the experts, and he must always bear in mind that the Permanent Under-Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary concerned have the right to have their views presented to the Secretary of State, whereas he has no such right. His prime duty is to see that the Secretary of State knows the mind of the Office and that the Office knows the mind of the Secretary of State. All the papers submitted to the Secretary of State normally pass through his hands. As a general rule he accompanies the Secretary of State on all his official journeys abroad, and if the appropriate experts are not available he must be ready to advise the Secretary of State on any subject that comes up. The Principal Private Secretary has under him three



assistant private secretaries, all members of the Service, who, with the Parliamentary Private Secretary mentioned above, form together the Secretary of State's personal staff. Other functions of the Private Secretary and his assistants are to act as the Foreign Secretary's link with other Departments of State, the Royal Household and the Cabinet Secretariat; to see that he is properly briefed for Ministerial and other meetings; to deal with his official engagements and with correspondence addressed to him personally on official matters; and to assist him with his work in Parliament. This latter function usually entails attendance of a private secretary at parliamentary proceedings in which the Secretary of State is taking part.

The other Ministers in the Foreign Office also have private secretaries who are members of the Service. Their functions are broadly similar to those of the Secretary of State's Private Secretary. The Private Secretary to one of the Parliamentary Under-Secretaries in the House of Commons deals, in addition to his normal private secretarial duties, with the collection and submission of Parliamentary Questions, draft answers to which are prepared by the Departments concerned.

In the old days the Private Secretaries loomed even larger on the Office horizon, for they were in virtual control, as personal advisers to the Secretary of State, over all postings and promotions in the Diplomatic Service. (Appointments in the Consular Service were, similarly, controlled almost exclusively by the Head of the Consular Department.) Nowadays these things are regulated more impersonally, and perhaps more scientifically, by the Personnel Department and—where senior nominations are concerned—by an Appointments Board comprising the Under-Secretaries and certain other high-ranking people. But the Private Secretaries remain, by virtue of their strategic position in the innermost ring, a very important element in the work and management of the Service generally.

Even from so summary an account of the structure of the Foreign Office it will be apparent that the lives and duties of those working in it are of so great a diversity as almost to preclude useful generalisation.

The Office is a very large and complicated hive; and perhaps this quality of physical size and complexity is the main thing that distinguishes the life in it from that at establishments abroad. At the average diplomatic Mission or Consulate one is on close terms with most, if not all, of the other members of the staff, and there is, especially at small posts, the atmosphere of a large family. In the Office, on the other hand, relations with one's colleagues, at any

rate in other departments, tend to be less personal and familiar. At the same time it is only at its headquarters at home that the Service gets to know itself. For the staff in London is constantly being refreshed with new blood from posts overseas, and there is a steady flow through London of officers transferred from one post abroad to another.

A more obvious way in which Foreign Service life at home differs from life abroad is that in London, except in the case of senior officers, one's social responsibilities toward foreigners are largely a matter for one's own discretion and are not an essential part of one's duties. In practice, many members of the Office have frequent social contacts with foreign diplomatic colleagues in London, and a special entertainment allowance is paid for this purpose to officers who come back to London after serving abroad. But for most officers and their wives in London the diplomatic cocktail party is an 'outing', whereas abroad it is part of their daily round.

Work in the Office starts regularly at either half-past nine or ten o'clock, after the office cleaners leave the building; and goes on, with a short break for luncheon, till late in the afternoon. The subordinate staff can usually leave by about six o'clock, and receive overtime pay if they work longer. Their seniors normally work till much later, and often have to take home with them in locked pouches a selection of the less confidential papers for study after dinner. Apart from such home work necessitated by the always heavy pressure of affairs in the senior ranks, it is—within obvious limits of general decorum—nobody's business how a member of the Office lives and occupies his time out of working hours, for in London he is not a representative. The salaries and allowances are nowadays assessed on a scale which enables each officer to live as comfortably as a Home Civil Servant of the same official standing (the reader may care to refer here to what is said on page 76 of Chapter IV about the financial provisions which short-term service at home makes necessary); but he makes his own arrangements. And unless he is quite near the top of the hierarchy he leads much the same sort of life as any civil servant. In contrast with his existence abroad this life is down to earth and without much glamour. But for that reason the average officer welcomes it as an occasional relief from the wear and tear of service abroad.

Moreover the change of viewpoint and perspective is undoubtedly good for him. True, our national roots and traditions are so strong that officers of Her Majesty's Foreign Service are seldom in any danger of losing their national identity however long they may serve abroad; and they would not be employed at all if they were not people with sufficient imagination to be able to visualise at long

range the general pattern of changing conditions at home. It is, for that matter, one of the duties of the Foreign Office to keep them informed of this pattern so far as possible by means of circulars and other background material. But for all that there is no substitute for occasional direct contact with one's own country if one is to represent it adequately abroad. Such contact is provided not only by the mere business of living in London for a spell: as will be seen from what is said in Chapter IV, there is an organised system of refresher courses for those at home on leave or temporarily employed at the Foreign Office.



## PART FOUR

### *Some Wider Considerations*



## CHAPTER X

### *Past and Present Diplomatic Practice*

THE foregoing descriptive chapters will, it is hoped, have given incidentally some slight idea of what present-day diplomatic practice is and is not. In them an attempt has been made in particular to show how the contemporary Foreign Service officer, in performing his various tasks at home and abroad, is always and essentially an intermediary, a middle link in some chain of action relating to foreign affairs, yet at the same time has a positive and personal rôle to play—how he is, in fact, neither a creator of policy nor a purely mechanical executant of the policy created by others. But misconceptions about his profession are so widespread and persistent that it may be well at this point to attempt a rather more definite appraisal. From the generalisations of a certain type of publicist concerning 'the old diplomacy and the new', one might well conclude that in the whole field of contemporary diplomatic activities a struggle is now going on between the entrenched forces of obscurantism and enlightened people who favour the general adoption of a new method of conducting international relations. There is seldom any serious effort to define precisely the nature of the new method, but the impression emerges that it is at any rate progressive and deserving of support because blamelessly 'open'. Meanwhile the newspaper accounts of current international affairs show clearly enough that another method, which must presumably be 'the old diplomacy', is still very much alive. The modern diplomatic representative would thus seem to be, at best, an occasional Jekyll but a nearly full-time Hyde. At all events only a small fraction of his activities can by any stretch of language be called open; and what is not open is inevitably suspect. Why should the taxpayer have to go on spending his money to finance an apparatus of diplomacy which so many decry as both outmoded and inherently objectionable?

There is a very long history behind these misconceptions. It is the history of diplomacy itself; and particularly of its (roughly) post-mediaeval phase, from the days when Louis XI of France first made of it so efficient and so odious an instrument of absolutism in Western Europe that he was called by his contemporaries the 'Universal Spider'. To try to recount that history here would be either to include a book within a book or to compress the facts to

the point of colourlessness and positive inaccuracy. And there is no need, for several excellent books are available.<sup>1</sup> Only the briefest retrospective glance will therefore be directed at a very large and complicated backcloth before we pass on to the consideration of what diplomatic practice really is in our own time.

Political terms, especially when their origin is not self-evident, are even more liable than other words to lose their proper meanings—and indeed all real meaning—through constant mishandling. They then become little more than mere noises for use in vituperation and incantation. The word 'diplomacy' has always been a liability for the thing it represents. Its pedigree happens indeed to be quite respectable and also rather dull. Etymologically, a diploma (from the Greek verb διπλόω) is simply a doubled or folded thing. In mediaeval Europe the term came to be used for certain types of official documents, relating in the main to a state's external affairs, which were folded for pigeon-holing in its archives. Diplomacy was then the archivist's job of keeping such documents in good order. Later it became, by extension, the jurist's job of studying and interpreting them. Only towards the end of the eighteenth century was the word first used to denote the actual conduct of foreign relations. But this unexceptionable pedigree is not self-evident. For some reason one does not usually think of diplomas in connexion with diplomacy. One does, on the other hand, feel subconsciously the etymological kinship of the latter word with 'duplicity', 'dubious' and the many slighting compound adjectives having 'double' as their first element—'double-faced', 'double-dyed', and so forth. As Darmesteter pointed out, the original sense of the word 'two' itself (or of its Indogermanic ancestor) was pejorative.

The critically inclined would no doubt contend that these trains of thought are caused by other and more obvious things than mere affinities of derivation. It is not for nothing, they would say, that in everyday life 'diplomacy' means, at best, tact carried to the point of guile. And there is much truth in this contention. Certainly the main reasons why diplomacy in general now has a bad reputation are that it was once a corrupt thing in general and that a few of its contemporary manifestations are still corrupt. Nevertheless it is important to bear in mind that by mere chance the dog was given a bad name which has made it peculiarly liable to be blamed, if not actually hanged, for the sins of its master. The master is correctly styled 'foreign policy'; but this title is without potency either for

<sup>1</sup> The general reader will find all he really needs to know about the history of the profession in an admirably concise work by Sir Harold Nicolson entitled *Diplomacy*, published by the Oxford University Press in the Home University Library of Modern Knowledge; and in the same author's Chichele Lectures on *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* published by Constable.



abuse or for spell-binding. Nobody would dare to talk in a general way of 'the sinister influence of foreign policy', for the phrase is manifestly nonsense: it is well understood by everyone that foreign policies there must be, that they vary enormously in character, and that their influence is not necessarily sinister at all. To talk in a general way of 'the sinister influence of diplomacy' is in reality more nonsensical still; for the many different kinds of diplomacy, ranging from the wholly baleful to the wholly beneficial, are one and all mere reflections of foreign policy. Yet this latter expression passes muster with all but the critical few as something fraught with meaning, since 'diplomacy' was ever a word to conjure with: it has, owing to a linguistic accident, disturbing overtones; and it is the name given to something largely unknown.

Criticism of the thing we now call diplomacy is far older than the present connotation of the word itself; but the charges, like the thing, have varied much in the course of time. Formerly there was no disposition to demand that diplomacy should be 'open' (which, as we shall see later, is in reality almost tantamount to contending that it should not exist at all): public opinion did not count for much, and the use of secret methods in the conduct of foreign relations was recognised as natural and indispensable. The complaint was not that diplomacy was secret, but that it was needlessly disreputable. There was, to be sure, no general realisation that the instrument was being put to the wrong use: war was commonly regarded as an essential feature of the relationship between states, and diplomacy as a method of waging war bloodlessly rather than as a means of preventing it. But despite this basic misconception there was criticism of the sordid nature of the instrument, and such criticism was amply justified. Diplomacy used as a weapon of offence is never heroic; it lacks the respectability of carnage. And undoubtedly the earlier types of diplomacy were for the most part thoroughly underhand. They had come to Western Europe from the extreme corruption of Byzantium, and the channels through which they had come had been the almost equally corrupt Italian city states of the Middle Ages. They did not by any means become purified by their first contact with the rulers of Western Europe. These rulers had no moral scruples whatsoever in the conduct of their foreign relations, and expected of their diplomatic agents that they should lie, cheat, bribe and steal. The agents did what was expected of them. Diplomacy in those days was exactly what its wielders wished to make of it. Within certain limits it still is and always must be, since it is essentially an instrument, not an independent force. Such as they are, however, these limits have been set, in the course of time, by the gradual emergence of diplomacy as

an institution possessing an increasingly stable and on the whole very honourable body of traditions and precepts.

These traditions and precepts were already long established, and exerting a modest force for good, at a time when many of the real makers of foreign policy had still advanced only a little way towards the conception of diplomacy as a means of preventing war rather than of waging it. As several contemporary memoirs show, the falsification of published documents by Bismarck, for example, was intensely repugnant and shocking to the professional diplomatists of his time. But the influence of diplomacy as an institution should not be exaggerated. Its morals can never be markedly superior to those of the governments whose tool it is; though, owing to the force of its long-established corporate traditions, they are likely nowadays to be never worse and usually rather better. In the earlier chapters of this book the case has indeed been stated against the mechanistic theory, according to which the modern diplomatist is a mere robot at the end of an electric wire and hence without any responsibility for the conduct of affairs. It has also been admitted that the Foreign Office itself has in recent times acquired perforce a certain influence in the making of foreign policy. Probably the growth of the Office's advisory function has in practice fully offset the decline in independence of the contemporary and (more or less) telegraphically-controlled British emissary abroad. If this is so, then the total influence of British career diplomacy, as exerted by the Foreign Service generally, counts for as much now as it ever did. But that influence is not, and never can be, the preponderating factor in the making of policy.

This is not usually realised. The tendency is always to think of diplomacy as possessing more corporate strength, individuality and independence than it actually has. Hence much confusion of thought. The great bulk of criticism ostensibly aimed at 'diplomacy' turns out, when analysed, to relate to particular foreign policies for which the diplomatist, who did not devise them, cannot reasonably be blamed. No attempt will be made to deal with such criticisms, for clearly the appraisal of past foreign policies does not lie within the proper scope of a book about the present British Foreign Service: it is the province of the historian. Nor is it even proposed to discuss the extent to which the quality of British diplomatic reporting and advice affected British foreign policies for better or for worse in particular historical cases. This latter topic too has been exhaustively examined by the professional historians—and generally with verdicts favourable to the former British Diplomatic Service. What concerns us here is simply the effect which recent criticisms ostensibly aimed at 'diplomacy'—whether valid or not,

and whether aimed at the right target or the wrong—have had on its present manifestations. Diplomatic practice in general is commonly supposed to have undergone radical changes of late under the pressure of such criticisms; there has been much talk of ‘open diplomacy’ and of ‘diplomacy by conference’ as new and welcome phenomena. Let us consider then what those changes have been, with particular reference to the British Foreign Service.

It would be truer to say that while genuinely diplomatic practice has altered very little in recent times, various other and essentially non-diplomatic methods of conducting international business have grown up beside it. Diplomacy in the generally-accepted sense of the term is not, after all, just any way, other than warfare, of conducting the relations between states. It is the conduct of the relations between the governments of states by officially accredited representatives. In a still more restricted sense which is yet quite widely accepted, it is the conduct of such relations by permanent (that is, resident) representatives belonging to professional cadres. But if one adopts either of these definitions it must be admitted that some considerable part of the work which the Foreign Service is nowadays called upon to do at home (in the domain of publicity, for instance) falls outside the scope of genuine diplomacy since it is not intergovernmental. It will further be apparent that in so far as diplomacy is really open—open, that is, in its processes as well as its results—it ceases in practice to be diplomacy. The merit of such ‘open diplomacy’, as conceived by those who advocate it, is that it enables popular opinion to be brought to bear, directly and at all stages, upon the conduct of business between nations. That this should happen may or may not be intrinsically a good thing; but to the extent to which it does happen it certainly tends to substitute other methods for the diplomatic and to stultify the rôle of the accredited governmental intermediary. The more his utterances—and reticences—are drowned by unofficial voices offstage, the less can it be said that relations are being conducted through channels specifically diplomatic or even governmental at all.

It must, however, be said at this point that the expression ‘open diplomacy’ is commonly used in two quite different senses, and has consequently become—at least for the more uncritical part of the public—hardly more than an emotional catchword devoid of any meaning. A good many people do indeed understand by it a completely open conduct of all international business, a play in which the actors perform exclusively on a public stage—and not merely in international bodies such as the United Nations, but wherever two states come into diplomatic contact. Such people have, as we shall see presently, the authority of a former president of the United

States for this conception of what modern international practice should be. But many others use the same expression merely to describe a state of affairs, whether potential or actual, in which the results of diplomacy, in the shape of treaty engagements, are always made public. It is, of course, quite right that they should be; and the world in general has duly acknowledged this by making the state of affairs actual. A standing rule of the United Nations lays down that its members must communicate promptly to the Secretariat, for registration and publication, the texts of all such treaties as they may enter into. There is no reason to suppose that this rule, compliance with which can alone make a treaty fully valid in the eyes of the world, is being disregarded—at any rate on this side of the Iron Curtain. Hence those who simply commend ‘open diplomacy’, meaning the thing which has already been achieved, are talking good sense though they use an ambiguous term; but those who (in normal countries such as our own) still clamour for it as a thing not yet achieved are either ignorant of the existing state of affairs, or alternatively demanding something which in reality is neither diplomacy nor a workable substitute for it.

The advocacy of ‘open diplomacy’—sometimes in one or other of these two senses, but very often without any conception of the difference between them—became strong during the first world war, though isolated voices criticising secret methods of conducting international relations had been raised long before then. Diplomacy had always been secret in the sense that the conduct of intergovernmental negotiations, as distinct from their results, had normally proceeded without publicity. And this had seemed entirely natural to the public in all countries. If the diplomatists conducting such negotiations before 1914 had been other than discreet and secretive they would not only have received short shrift from the governments which employed them: they would also have been condemned by popular sentiment everywhere as disloyal and incompetent. It is still so today, for that matter. The British public as a whole would still condemn, and rightly, any British diplomatist who gave the press full and factual accounts of his day-to-day negotiations with a foreign government—though it would usually be glad enough to have the facts from somebody. In other words it is still quite generally accepted, whenever the matter is properly analysed, that such publicity as may be desirable concerning intergovernmental transactions lies within the sphere of responsibility of governments, not within that of the diplomatic negotiators they employ. Nevertheless at the public inquests of 1918 and later it was the fashion to complain loosely of ‘secret diplomacy’ rather than of ‘secret agreements’; for diplomacy, as a thing inherently suspect, was an easy target. Moreover among many

of those agitating for 'open diplomacy' there was, as has been explained above, a genuine and widespread confusion between two distinct objectives.

Some of the principal political leaders who advocated 'open diplomacy' specifically demanded the completely open sort; and, significantly, the agitation for this was strongest in the United States. The main advocate was President Woodrow Wilson. Eventually, as is well known, his policies were repudiated by his own country, with heavy consequences for the world in general; but they were not repudiated for their advocacy of open diplomacy in the widest and least practical sense. In the first of his Fourteen Points, Wilson called for

Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view'.

It was by way of partially giving effect to this declaration of principle that Article 18 of the Covenant of the League of Nations later prescribed registration with, and publication by, the League Secretariat of all international treaties and engagements entered into by its members. This was entirely unobjectionable and indeed valuable: the more widely international engagements are known, the less likelihood there is of the nations being led into war through misunderstanding of one another's commitments. But manifestly much more had originally been intended by the stipulation that diplomacy should always proceed '*frankly and in the public view*'. Wilson himself, it is true, discovered soon enough that this was not a practical possibility even at major international conferences, let alone in the normal diplomatic conduct of bilateral relations. Already towards the end of 1918, at the pressing instance of two of his own advisers, he made it known that his First Point was not meant to preclude 'confidential negotiations involving delicate matters'; and during the later stages of the Versailles Conference, it was he, more than any of the other leading negotiators, who insisted on rigorous secrecy. Nevertheless the demand for open diplomacy in the sense of open diplomatic negotiations has continued ever since, if only because this retraction received far less publicity than the original demand.

The theory implicit in this demand is of course that 'the people' are always pacific, never bellicose. To many this is an article of faith, a basic axiom of the democratic creed. Unfortunately, however, a dispassionate study of recent history shows the theory to be untrue. It belongs, in fact, to the same class of pronouncements as the once-popular slogan 'Forty million people cannot be wrong'—which

implies that forty million other people who happen to hold diametrically-opposed views must also somehow be right. Ours is the age of nationalism; and nationalism is a disease of entire nations, not merely of their rulers. Ours is also an age of high economic tensions. The normal man in the street does not think unselfishly in terms of the good of the human race as a whole: his desires and impulses are those of a much-harassed competitor in the struggle for existence. 'The people' in any given country, it is true, never consciously wish to bring upon themselves or others the sufferings of war. But all-too often they appear to range themselves wholeheartedly behind their rulers in demanding more than is permissible from the people of some other country, and in urging the attempt to get it by methods which in fact lead inevitably to war.

At any rate this is demonstrably true in so far as one may take at its face value what passes for popular agitation at moments of international crisis. At such moments the people, often enough, are not merely behind their rulers, but actively pushing them into extreme courses. But it should be borne in mind that seemingly popular agitation can seldom if ever be expressed except through intermediaries. It is voiced by political personalities, who can and do mould the public opinion they claim to represent. And above all it is voiced by the press, which, in all countries where it is not controlled by the governments, has its own interests to promote and therefore sometimes seeks, similarly, to create the public opinion which it purports to champion. Bellicose public opinion may therefore be, and often is, the result of other things than spontaneous genesis and growth; but this does not make it any the less dangerous as a force to be reckoned with in international relations.

Hence even if it were true that 'the people' are everywhere pacific by nature, this would not in practice mean that a fully open diplomacy, in the shape of unofficial control over the day-to-day conduct of foreign policy, afforded a real safeguard against official un wisdom; for it leaves the intermediaries out of account. Publicity merely swells the number of influential persons claiming, with varying degrees of plausibility, to speak for the people; it does not enable the un prompted voice of the people to be heard. And since the chorus of these claimants is always discordant, it is always hampering to the consistent conduct of any policy. The truth of the matter is that fully open diplomacy of this sort, in so far as it may be prescribed as a check on the conduct of foreign relations by governments which have been elected in accordance with sound parliamentary principles, is not really democratic at all. It does not enable the people of the countries concerned to express their desires as unmistakably as—let alone more unmistakably than—they have already

done and are doing by the normal democratic process of bringing to power, and keeping in power, the group of leaders who represent the parliamentary majority. It does, on the other hand, tend positively to hinder the realisation of these desires (and clearly realisation is a much more important democratic aim than mere expression) by revealing disunity and thus weakening the force of national action available for any purpose. The diplomatic broth is at least as liable as any other to be spoilt by the ministrations of too many cooks; and the corollary is that a democratically-governed people will tend to be best nourished when it chooses its meal from the bill of fare but leaves the cooking to its elected governmental representatives assisted by their diplomatic servants. As Viscount Grey of Fallodon wisely said: 'An atmosphere of reticence, even to the point of *différence*, is favourable, provided there be at work good faith and a living desire to keep the peace. Sensation and *éclat* produce the atmosphere that is favourable to storms. To avoid creating that atmosphere will be the great difficulty of "open" diplomacy, if by that phrase is meant daily publicity.'

This, as we have said, holds good for democratically-organised countries. Ours is one of them, and what mainly concerns us in this book is the particular background of the work of its foreign service—a background necessarily modified in some degree both by world-wide and by purely national agitation for open diplomacy. Certainly the same does not hold good for countries which are governed undemocratically. We may well feel that genuinely popular control over the day-to-day implementation of foreign policies by some governments would be an excellent thing for the world in general: the policies could hardly be more pernicious than they are now, and might become much less so if the people concerned had their say. The effect would no doubt be a weakening of action, but we for our part should not find that at all regrettable. Our wishing, however, will not bring this about; and indeed the surest way to prevent its ever being brought about is to weaken our powers of action in the domain of foreign affairs by trying to insist on what is, for ourselves, an unnecessary and positively harmful luxury.

Often linked with 'open diplomacy', as a sort of slogan or catch-word purporting to describe the new and the good, is the term 'diplomacy by conference'. It is, however, equally meaningless unless elaborated. Conference diplomacy is not necessarily at all new; nor does it invariably constitute a good method of transacting international business. It does indeed usually represent a departure from the strict diplomatic norm, in that it usually short-circuits to some extent the accredited diplomatic intermediaries. Generally, too, it is

<sup>1</sup> *Twenty-five Years*: Vol. 1, p. 273.

a good deal more public: any international conference inevitably attracts widespread attention and becomes the object of speculation more or less well informed. But most types of 'diplomacy by conference' are neither new nor genuinely 'open'.

There have, of course, been international conferences after every major war for centuries past. And not only peace conferences: after the Napoleonic wars, for example, there were a series of conferences between the members of the Holy Alliance which were specifically designed to preserve the *status quo* in Europe, and these continued till 1825 when the system broke down. The only new thing about international diplomatic conferences in general after 1919 was their greatly-increased frequency. Both the taste for them and the technique of conducting them had been developed to a high pitch by the Allied Powers during the first world war, when their frequency had been made possible by the improvement of communications, and necessary by the many urgent needs of the time. And the method continued to be widely resorted to in the uneasy period immediately following the Versailles settlement. Sometimes indeed it proved markedly successful; and most of all was this so when the problems for discussion were highly technical and of concern to a large number of powers. A good example of the successful sort was the Washington conference of 1921 on naval disarmament, the fruits of which could certainly not have been achieved by any other form of procedure then known.

Since that date international relations have grown steadily more complex, and consequently the need for international diplomatic conferences is now greater than it ever was before. It is, however, important to bear in mind not only that such conferences are no innovation as such, but also that in practice they tend to supplement rather than to replace the strictly normal method of negotiation through accredited and resident intermediaries. It has been stated above that they tend to short-circuit these intermediaries to some extent; and, certainly they do so to the extent to which they really involve (as they usually purport to do) direct negotiation between foreign secretaries—or even prime ministers—who foregather with open minds to settle some international question. But experience has shown that they succeed best when the road has been thoroughly paved for them, and a good part of it actually travelled, by extensive and thorough diplomatic transactions of the normal sort. Without such preparation they are apt to produce over-hasty results under the compelling pressure of time and of the publicity which they invite; and when they do so, the very fact that principals have been directly and personally involved becomes an impediment to subsequent adjustment.



One of the main merits that have been claimed for the method of 'diplomacy by conference' is that it promotes international understanding by bringing ministerial negotiators into frequent and personal contact with one another. And it is probably true to say that it usually does so. But not always: the history of the years between the two world wars shows that it sometimes, on the contrary, exacerbates personal animosities which would have remained dormant if the principals had stayed at long range.

In short, the method of 'diplomacy by conference', in the general sense of international meetings between ministers, is nowadays often both necessary and productive of excellent results; but is not entirely without counter-balancing disadvantages, and is in any event no complete substitute for the traditional diplomacy of the diplomats.

The aftermath of the first world war did however produce one really new and very important development of 'diplomacy by conference'. Indeed if this new thing had proved to be all that its champions intended, it would have become a substitute for diplomacy as currently understood rather than a development of any particular kind of it. This was the setting up of the League of Nations as a regularly-functioning and public international forum served by a permanent secretariat of its own. The new instrument of international relations was reproduced afresh after the second world war, in the United Nations organisation, and also—on a less than world-wide scale—in the other current experiments in supranational control. These experiments are widely different from 'diplomacy by conference' in the general sense. For, as indicated above, they alone involve open procedures—in theory, completely open—in the handling of international affairs. In so far as they really do so, they may fairly be said to spell a change in the whole character of international transactions, in that they call for a primarily forensic technique.

We are told by the historians that the first European diplomatists—those of the Greek city states of the sixth and succeeding centuries B.C.—were men chosen primarily for their oratorical powers and were employed solely to plead their states' causes in open forum.<sup>1</sup> This forum was the periodically-held 'amphictyonic council', which foreshadowed in some sort the principles of the League of Nations. (Sir Harold Nicolson describes it as 'something between a Church Congress, an Eisteddfod and a meeting of the League of Nations

<sup>1</sup> In the early years of the seventeenth century, Sir Henry Wotton, Ambassador of King James I to Venice, could still describe himself as 'orator': 'Serenissimi Angliae, Scotiae, Franciae, et Hiberniae Regis Orator primus ad Venetos.'

Assembly'.) But in spite of this very early anticipation of an international technique which is usually—and for all practical purposes rightly—looked upon as entirely modern, it is true to say that the methods of traditional diplomacy as it grew up in Western Europe are quite different from those of the orator. The art of the traditional diplomatist is the art of unpublicised discussion and negotiation *à deux*. Persuasive he must certainly be; but never oratorical, for oratory would be wholly out of place in such dealings. To say of a diplomatist 'He treated me as though I were a public meeting' is to damn him as utterly incompetent. But the debates of the United Nations and most other international bodies are public meetings in the most rigorous sense; and the official representative attending them, if he is a career diplomatist, must change his normal methods, accordingly. He must put his country's case as a lawyer puts his client's, for he is speaking in open court. His powers of negotiating manoeuvre—of bargaining, in fact—are, in theory at any rate, restricted to the formulation of resolutions and counter-resolutions. Apart from such quasi-negotiation, he must confine himself to arguing his case exclusively on what are, or purport to be, its intrinsic merits, and with a formality that largely excludes candour; leaving it to the final ballot to determine how much of what he wants he actually gets. This is a technique altogether foreign to his normal methods of doing business. If it can be called diplomacy at all, it is certainly diplomacy of an entirely new sort.

In an earlier chapter we have discussed in general terms the significance of the United Nations and other international bodies as instruments for the regulation of international business; and have suggested that if the ideals for which these bodies stand are ever fully realised in practice, diplomacy of the traditional kind may fade almost to vanishing-point. The more nearly they are realised, the more nearly will a system of effective universal government have been achieved; and under universal government there will be but little room for diplomacy as we now understand it. There may still be some need for forensic talent, since conflicting interests will still have to be adjusted. But, if the existing procedures of national government are any guide, even that need will not in fact be very large; for the assumption is that nationalism will have faded from the international scene in as large a measure as regionalism has faded from the national. Meanwhile we are so far from having achieved these ideals that the new and forensic technique called for in theory by this most advanced form of 'diplomacy by conference' is still, in practice, subsidiary to the traditional diplomatic methods. Just as international conferences in general cannot hope to succeed without elaborate diplomatic preparation, so traditional diplomacy is needed

in large measure for the particular type of 'diplomacy by conference' that is practised in international bodies such as the United Nations. And it is needed, in this case, for the purposes of concurrent negotiation as well as for preparatory clearing of the ground. It is no secret these days that a very large part of the real work done at international bodies is done by the resort to thoroughly old-fashioned diplomatic methods in the lobbies and corridors. This may be held to be regrettable and to stultify to a large extent the expressed principles of the organisations concerned, but in the present state of international relations it is an inescapable necessity.

The fact is that the world is not yet ready for exclusively open transactions conducted by the method of public debate alone. Lobbying methods have to be resorted to because the official procedures are inadequate by themselves. No state could afford to face the harm to its own interests that would be incurred by its being the first to rely solely on public debate. Nor would universal and simultaneous reliance on it--were that possible--be likely to produce satisfactory results. In all fully-publicised debate there is a very great temptation to speak for effect and with an eye to some ulterior public, whether in one's own country or in another. Negotiators in general tend to be concerned above all to demonstrate to their own people that they have kept their end up; and some, notoriously, exploit the world-wide publicity attendant on deliberations in open forum for purposes of the most blatant propaganda. Public oratory coupled with voting procedures is in any case an unyielding medium for the adjustment of conflicting national interests, and can seldom be relied upon to produce the maximum of reasonable compromise. Positions are taken up in so unmistakable a manner that retreat from them becomes difficult if not impossible. There are those, indeed, who contend that this extreme publicity is a positive safeguard: it must tend, they say, to deter governments from assuming unreasonable attitudes such as they might feel no shame to adopt in the greater privacy of old-style unpublicised negotiation. But most impartial observers would agree that so far this contention has been stultified by events. In so far as governments are self-respecting, the safeguard is not needed; in so far as they are not, it is inoperative. It is the misfortune of the United Nations--and of the world--that some of the member states are entirely without shame in their public attitudes, treating the institution as a mere sounding-board for propaganda addressed to indiscriminating circles far beyond its orbit.

There are, moreover, certain other and serious practical drawbacks to the public transaction of international affairs in a world-wide forum. It may possibly be sound democratic theory that every-

body should have a say in everything; but it is certainly not sound practice. Intricate though the ties between nations have become of late, they are not yet by any means so intricate as to give every member state a real and direct interest in all the affairs of every other. Yet every member has a vote for casting in every matter discussed, and this vote is in practice a negotiable asset. State A may be fundamentally indifferent to, and also quite ignorant of, the tangled argument between states Y and Z, which lie at the opposite end of the earth; but it is directly involved in a controversy with State B, which is a neighbour. In this latter controversy, Z may be publicly ranged already on A's side, or so deeply committed by its avowed principles as to be unable in any circumstances to vote for B. Y, again, may be the moving spirit in a regional group of states which are equally uninterested in A's controversy with B but are accustomed to vote together in order to make their weight felt. A's vote in the quarrel between Y and Z is therefore likely to be cast in favour of Y for reasons unconnected with the intrinsic merits of the case. And there will probably be quite a lot of secret confabulation in corridors before the deal goes through.

It is not, of course, suggested that this sort of thing always happens. Abstention from the voting would be a more fitting procedure for A in the circumstances described—though often an abstention may be as effective in its result as a negative vote, and hence as worth haggling for in the lobbies. But notoriously it does happen so often as to constitute a regular feature of international transactions in the United Nations forum; and whenever it does happen, forms of 'the old diplomacy' are inevitably brought into play. They are not, for that matter, the most reputable of its forms: in the old days before the application of ballot procedures to international relations the governments of the world did at least confine their diplomacy in the main to affairs in which they had a genuine interest. The average career diplomatist, conscious of the corporate traditions of his profession at their best, does not very willingly engage in political horse-coping. But he is not a free agent, and must put the needs of his country before his own prejudices and scruples.

In an assembly which may comprise upwards of fifty members this kind of lobbying work tends, for obvious mathematical reasons, to reproduce itself most prolifically. And it goes on not only at the meeting-place of the assembly, but also in the capital cities of the countries concerned. We have assumed by way of example the existence of two disputes between pairs of states; but apart from actual disputes there are several other types of business that frequently give rise to elaborate negotiation off-stage. All kinds of pet schemes and special studies are liable to be proposed for reasons more or

less disinterested, and all of them may involve such negotiation; for it is much easier to obtain the inclusion of a subject in the agenda than to bring about its exclusion. If you attempt to exclude another state's pet scheme (which may from your own point of view be harmless enough and even worthy of respect, but none the less means additional work for an already overburdened assembly), you will probably prejudice your chances of securing the inclusion of some project of your own to which you attach great importance. Hence the agenda is almost always cramped to bursting-point. And all this increases the work of the professional diplomatist, whether he be in charge of the public conduct of his country's case or merely at the elbow of a ministerial representative.

To say this is not to question the value of the work done at international bodies as one of the means of regulating the affairs between nations. That value is certainly great, and the method has come to stay. The purpose is simply to explain how it comes about that what purports to be, and to some extent is, a radically new method—in that it is in theory completely public and hence calls for a forensic technique—in practice not only involves, for the present, the resort to old-fashioned diplomatic procedures by way of supplement, but actually enlarges their scope and complexity. One may legitimately regret that it should do so, and look forward to the day when it will cease to do so by reason of the greater corporate maturity of the nations. But that day is not yet; and meanwhile the career diplomatist is still required, for better or worse, to operate by divers methods of which the traditional is by no means the least important.

## *Some Qualifications Desirable in Members of the Foreign Service*

CONSIDERATION of what contemporary diplomatic methods are leads naturally to speculation about what the contemporary diplomatist should be—what personal qualities and attainments he needs for a job that is evidently so far from simple. The difficulty here is to choose. In the course of the last two and a half centuries a good many people have already written on this subject; and their opinions, despite differences of emphasis, show an impressive measure of agreement. They have, that is, been unanimous in concluding that for the proper exercise of his profession the diplomatist requires very nearly all the known excellences of mind, of heart and of person. What is equally impressive, and even perhaps a little disturbing, is that most of these writers have been diplomatists themselves. It is fair to add that strict objectivity is among the virtues they have preached as necessary for their calling; and it is in any case impossible to dispute their general thesis. Ideally speaking, nothing short of all-round perfection can be wished for in a man who is called upon to represent in his own person both his Sovereign and his Country, and to handle things at once so difficult and so important for the future of the human race as are the official contacts between nations. One cannot, in principle, deny that such a man ought to be clever, wise, good, beautiful, and much else besides—however awkward it may be for the diplomatist or ex-diplomatist to say so himself.

Nevertheless such statements of the ideal, though unquestionable, are not in practice very helpful except in so far as they may be qualified. They can even do positive harm, for lack of sufficient qualification, by discouraging the would-be candidate for the diplomatic career who does at least possess one of the essential qualities, namely modesty. Given sufficient space, it is not difficult to describe the perfect diplomatic representative: one has only to catalogue the attributes generally held to be desirable in the human species. But such a being has yet to be found, and it is perhaps more useful therefore to consider which of these attributes should be given priority in choosing from among people none of whom can possess them all in full measure. One cannot, for instance, place physical courage very high on the list of requirements for a profession in which physical violence plays no part; yet if a diplomatist should lack it, the fact

is likely to come out sooner or later in a world much given to violence, and if it does it will greatly damage his standing. For the most part the order of priorities is fairly obvious, but there is one virtue—honesty—which should stand at the head of the list though the world in general supposes the diplomatist to be better without it.

It is perhaps in the domain of purely intellectual qualities and attainments that perfection is least to be hoped for. Manifestly a comprehensive grasp of all subjects connected with politics, sociology, economics and finance is highly desirable, but manifestly too it is quite beyond reach in an age of intense specialisation. The more the diplomatist understands of all these things, the better will he be able to do his job, for all of them will come his way. But nowadays he cannot possibly be expert in all of them, or even in most of them. What, then, is the best humanly attainable substitute? Probably it is a composite quality: the ability both to draw out knowledge and wisdom possessed by others, and to synthesise it fully for one's own use. The head of a diplomatic mission must know how best to exploit the experience and intelligence of all his collaborators, specialised and other—not meanly, indeed, or secretively, but with full recognition of what he owes. He must in fact be a picker of the brains of others; but he must have sufficient general intelligence to be able to pick discriminatingly, appreciating what is of most value in his pickings, and to make of what he finally selects an instrument well shaped to his own hand. And having done these things with due acknowledgment of his sources, he must have the moral courage to accept responsibility not only for the way in which he proceeds to handle the instrument, but also for such intrinsic shortcomings as it may have by reason of the quality of the material. No more than the Secretary of State himself can he ever say, when things go wrong, 'I am sorry, but the fact is that I was badly advised by my experts'. It may be perfectly true that he was; but his position at the head of his own lesser organisation carries with it the obligation to stand answerable for all its actions—even those performed in his name but without his knowledge, as many must be in these days when the pressure of work is so high. This is not to say, of course, that he must refrain from internal disciplinary investigation when things do go wrong through the fault of his staff, or from trying to get, by drawing and discarding, the best staff he can. But, for all that, he has in relation to the world beyond his own organisation that quasi-parental responsibility which is the inescapable concomitant of leadership.

It will be seen that although we started out in the last paragraph to discuss the intellectual side of the diplomatist's equipment we have already strayed over into the question of his moral qualities

and character. The truth is that this question overshadows all others. He can, indeed, by no means afford to let who will be clever: on the contrary, his is a profession in which trained intelligence and native wit must obviously count for much. But unless he has also an unsailable integrity of mind—which connotes both honesty and moral courage, since it usually requires moral courage to be honest—it will avail him little to possess all the purely intellectual gifts in large measure. And there are two reasons for emphasising this fact, even at the risk of being thought to insist too much. Not only do some people seriously question it; others, who do not question it, tend to take it too much for granted. Naturally enough, it is questioned by those to whom the very scope and purposes of diplomacy itself are suspect; and—perhaps not less naturally—it is taken very much for granted by those who, while feeling no prejudice against the profession as such, are unaware of the special problems of personal integrity which it presents. To the first group it may seem almost as unconvincing as it would be to assert that a professional card-sharper should have high standards of personal morality. To the second it may seem almost as unnecessary as it would be to emphasise that a surgeon or a station-master should be an honest man. But the truth is that while on the one hand the proper task of the diplomatist is not, as so many people still suppose, to deceive, the competent performance of his task demands a constant and often difficult exercise of moral discrimination.

We have tried already to deal with the chief prejudices against the profession as such. There are, as we have seen, plenty of reasons for them. Its remote but still remembered past certainly was quite often disreputable. Its very name is etymologically unfortunate. It is credited widely (and despite what has elsewhere been called the 'mechanistic' conception of it) with wielding far more influence over the formulation of policy than it really does—and this, at a time when the international results of policy clearly leave much to be desired. It is somewhat allergic to the rays of full publicity. It represents the interposition of officialdom—and of what is often assumed without further question to be entrenched and unprogressive bureaucracy—in the relationships between peoples and between their elected spokesmen. And so on and so forth. These things have been touched upon in earlier chapters. It remains however to consider why, if the profession itself is as innocent of moral corruption as we have nevertheless suggested, the exercise of it should require a high degree of moral discrimination.

It would of course be no adequate answer to say that the diplomatist, unlike the surgeon and the station-master, is essentially a dealer in words. He is; but so for that matter is the telegraph opera-



tor, amongst many others! Were the 'mechanistic theory' even approximately true, indeed, no particular question of personal honesty would arise. As already stated, the theory is not even approximately true. But not everybody understands just what its falsity implies in terms of moral problems for the diplomatist. He must, as we have seen, continue to shoulder many quite heavy burdens of initiative and consequent responsibility notwithstanding all technical developments of the means of communication; and for this, integrity in the sense of moral courage is required. But even when his non-representational function is essentially that of a transmitter it is also, and invariably, that of an interpreter. And it is the interpretative function that calls for integrity in the sense of honesty.

It is assumed here that it falls to the diplomatist to interpret honest foreign policies. Certainly not all foreign policies are honest, even nowadays; and certainly the diplomatist cannot combine efficiency with personal integrity in the furthering of a foreign policy which is dishonest and known by him to be so. But no one has better reason than he to prefer the handling of policies of the honest sort, for his personal reputation is closely bound up with his official duties and constitutes his principal asset as a negotiator. The world of professional diplomacy is still small enough to ensure that in this career a man's past repute should accompany him wherever he goes. When he arrives at a new post, and particularly if he is the head of it, he may be certain that he is already known to some extent, by hearsay, both to his foreign diplomatic colleagues and to the ministry of foreign affairs. If therefore he has in the past been the instrument of some disingenuous policy elsewhere, his present usefulness will be seriously impaired. For that reason alone, and apart from the personal unpleasantness of being distrusted, although it is in theory quite possible for a diplomatist to turn an honest policy into a dishonest one by his own performance as an intermediary, it is also true to say that in practice he very rarely does so wittingly. He has usually no inducement to do so, and every inducement not to do so. He is, in fact, very much more likely to be the victim of dishonesty in others. Should he become aware of the disingenuousness of a policy which he is instructed to put into effect, the only strictly moral course open to him is to resign. But it may very well happen that he is not aware of it, since he is merely one of a number of instruments used for putting it into effect and has a regionally-restricted field of operations. Those capable of devising dishonest courses are not likely to be scrupulously candid about them with the agents they employ; and often enough the true character of a policy cannot be gauged adequately except at the central point from which its ramifications spread.

We would not, however, be thought to suggest that the diplomatic representatives employed by governments of the generally self-respecting sort often are in fact the victims of dishonesty on the part of the real makers of policy whom they serve. Such governments are as well aware as the diplomatists themselves of the fact that disingenuousness does not pay in the long run; and that, in particular, an emissary with a reputation tarnished through their fault is an inefficient tool. The only type of government that wittingly ignores these simple truths is the fundamentally unprincipled and aggressive type which counts on so exploiting short-term diplomatic and other victories as to render the disillusionment of the vanquished unimportant in practice. To this type of government the saying 'once bitten, twice shy' is of no cogency, since it does not matter how shy a victim may remain capable of feeling once he is safely in the digestive canal. There are still such governments in the world today; but in this book we are concerned with British policies and British diplomacy. Amongst governments of the sort which is happily more normal, what is decried by the outside observer as 'dishonest diplomacy' is usually not even dishonest policy, but rather the product of muddled thinking on the part of the makers of policy. The truth which it is desired to emphasise here is simply that the diplomatists themselves are even less likely than self-respecting governments to indulge wilfully in dishonest practices, and this for two reasons: they feel the brunt of such practices in their own persons, being at the point of contact; and their appreciation of long-term effects is even keener than that of the authorities they represent, since their individual careers normally last much longer than governments last in office.

But though the diplomatist is primarily an instrument for the execution of policies devised by others, we have seen that he is an instrument with a personality. And undoubtedly his continuing ill repute, in so far as it does continue, is caused partly by the fact that many outside observers are vaguely aware of this personal factor without understanding what it means. On the assumption that he is more than a mere passive transmitting agent--and his apparently almost undiminished importance in the scheme of things certainly suggests this--what part can he possibly play in the handling of an honest policy without introducing an element of distortion? If he is a manipulator at all, surely he must make the straight crooked?

He is indeed a manipulator amongst other things; but the truth is that his manipulation actually prevents the straight from becoming crooked in its passage from one group of national mentalities to another. What the outside observer does not commonly realise, in fact, is that any appreciable gap caused by differences of mentality

exists. It does exist; and the bridging of it calls for interpretation in the interests of accuracy. Distortion may indeed occur in the interpretative process when this process is overdone by the diplomatist in his striving after subtlety and accommodation; but some degree of interpretation is invariably necessary, and too little resort to it is just as prejudicial to accuracy as too much. To gauge exactly how much is necessary on each occasion requires a constant and painstaking exercise of judgment; and this is one of the functions that the diplomatist is there to perform.

The head of a mission, as we have already seen, is not usually treated as an automaton either by his own employers or by the foreign authorities with whom he lives and deals. His personality as an interpreter should count for much, and is generally relied upon by both sides to do so. Sometimes, indeed, as we have also explained elsewhere, his own ministry will prescribe exactly what they wish him to say and the form of the communication in which he is to say it. More often, however, they allow him a good deal of latitude. And they are wise to do so, for he is better placed than they are to gauge the degree of receptivity of the government addressed. They may, for example, be indignant with it for some reason good or bad, and therefore disposed to be sharp. Such sharpness is in that case a part of their policy, and it is not for the diplomatic representative to diminish its effect without authority—though, as a conscientious and responsible intermediary charged with the long-term task of maintaining good relations so far as possible, he may legitimately plead with them to be allowed to diminish it. But he must invariably consider effect in relation to interpretation. In the light of his local experience and specialised knowledge, he must think precisely what form of language really will convey to his hearers the degree of sharpness that his own government intend. He may conclude that some watering-down is required in the interests of true interpretation. He may, on the other hand, feel that stiffening is needed in order to produce the wished-for effect. Being better aware than his government of the degree of toughness that characterises those with whom he deals, he must always use his own judgment as an interpreter.

This interpretative function of the diplomatist is of real importance because, in international relations, seemingly small differences of procedure and phraseology are apt to have large results. It calls not only for keen judgment in general, but also for a specialised awareness of the psychological factors that create differences in the use of language. Literal translation is scarcely ever the most accurate way of conveying thought, for every language has its own highly distinctive mould. To say, in Persian, 'What submission shall

'your servant make?' is no more than a tolerably polite way of saying 'I don't know'; and the Spaniard who replies 'It is yours' when you admire his house means simply 'Glad you like it!' Each nation has its own formulas of courtesy—and also its own kinds of bluntness which are apt to seem discourteous to others. Notoriously the speech of Asiatic peoples is full of elaborate urbanities, yet there are many oriental languages in which the word 'please', which we ourselves use hundreds of times a day, can only be translated by a little-used circumlocution. These differences in the use of language are mentioned merely because of what underlies them: they illustrate the fact that no two nations have exactly the same ideas about what is acceptably polite; and the diplomatist, whether or not he himself uses a foreign language in his work, has to bear this fact constantly in mind. Wherever practicable indeed Her Majesty's Government prefer as a matter of principle to use English in their official communications with foreign governments; and conversation with a minister for foreign affairs is likely to be conducted in French if he cannot or will not talk English. This, however, does not by any means absolve the British diplomatist from considering what the real impact of a given English text, as received from the Foreign Office, will be upon a mind formed by modes of thought which in all probability are wholly alien to our own. And the same duty is laid upon him in the interpretation to his own government of the words, attitudes and actions of the foreign authorities with whom he deals.

In both these rôles the natural temptation to which the diplomatist is exposed as a middleman will usually be to soften asperities beyond that point which true interpretation may demand; and to yield to it is of course a definite fault. Indeed the fact that it is sometimes yielded to may perhaps help to explain the reputation diplomatists have for disingenuousness. But that reputation would be considerably better if it were more generally realised that, because each nation is widely different in mentality from every other, the diplomatist cannot be an entirely honest intermediary without exercising to the full his powers of interpretation. For him to be unimaginatively literal would usually be a positive dishonesty.

Though we have mentioned by way of illustration the difference between racial ideas of what is and is not polite, it should not, of course, be supposed that the diplomatist's interpretative function is confined to gauging and allowing for these particular differences. They are merely one aspect of the diversity of national mentalities; and he must study this diversity in all its aspects. He needs, in fact, to be sensitive and perceptive in that most exacting of all branches of psychology, the comprehension of one race by another. The

politician too needs psychological acumen, since his main tool is persuasion; but normally he deals with his own compatriots, whose ways and outlook he probably shares and certainly knows with a life-long familiarity. The colonial administrator has a much harder psychological task, since he deals with foreign peoples; but, although he will fail if he merely seeks to impose his will without understanding those he administers, he does at least operate by the force of direct authority as well as by persuasion. The diplomatist's task combines the difficulties of both these other professions. He deals for the most part with foreign peoples (and with a good many of them, in the course of a normal career); and although he may, in a sense, have the authority of superior physical force behind him, to the extent to which he makes play with it he forsakes the path of genuine diplomacy to become a mere brandisher of firearms. For diplomacy in the proper sense is not militant; not a method of achieving national ends by the threat of physical coercion (for all it has often been so misused, and still is by totalitarian régimes), but an instrument of international accommodation and symbiosis.

Sensitiveness and comprehension are not, however, enough. They must be reinforced by a capacity for real and positive sympathy if the diplomatist is to make the most of his job. He will not, of course, be able to feel much sympathy for some of the régimes he has to deal with; and indeed there are one or two régimes in the world today for which the British diplomatist ought not to feel any at all. But the ordinary people of all countries, though seldom as politically sane and peace-loving as some would have us believe, are without exception likeable as individuals; and the diplomatist is disastrously handicapped whose faculty of human sympathy is limited, however slightly, by a prickly consciousness of racial and cultural differences. Even the cleverest feigning will prove an inadequate substitute, for the simple reason that it will be quite widely recognised by instinct for what it is. Unlike the genuine article, moreover, it can never lead to that quasi-intuitive understanding of the other man's point of view which plays so great (though indefinable) a part in diplomacy of the reputable sort.

It is, admittedly, unusual and even somewhat shocking to contend that the diplomatist should have a warm heart. The popular idea, on the contrary, is that he needs for his trade a positively saurian frigidity both of temperament and of demeanour. Cynicism, an air of superiority, a high gloss and a poker face—these, notoriously, are the standard characteristics of the stage diplomatist; and undeniably there are some in the profession who feel it incumbent upon themselves to try to live up to the prevalent notion of what they

should be and how they should behave. Often they succeed only too well. But the notion derives from misconceptions (which have been discussed above) concerning the morality of the diplomatist's calling, and is fundamentally wrong. A poker face is needed for playing poker; but diplomacy of the genuine type has little or nothing in common with that game. Certainly the diplomatist should not be emotionally effusive in his behaviour, however excellent the relations may be which he is called upon to conduct. And certainly he should preserve an unruffled calm when things go wrong and relations become strained. But that is not to say that he should be, or should look like, a cold fish on a slab, even if the public expect it of him. He will succeed best in his job when he not only likes at heart, but also shows quite plainly that he likes, the fellow human beings with whom he comes in contact. And he would be well advised to make this liking the plainer, the greater the racial and other differences may be, since he will have a correspondingly stouter initial barrier to break down.

It must, however, be repeated here that it is of no use for him to simulate, however cleverly, what is not there within him. As a nation we have in general, and notwithstanding a widespread belief to the contrary among foreigners, but little racial prejudice of the deep-seated kind. (It would indeed be strange if we had much, seeing that ours is one of the most thoroughly-mixed races on earth.) It is our reserved manner, and a habit of conformity to certain mainly superficial conventions—both of these things being the product of a particular educational tradition—that so often lead foreigners to the opposite and false conclusion. Nevertheless racial prejudices do crop up here and there, in this country as in others; and therefore it cannot be too strongly emphasised that the prospective candidate for the British Foreign Service who is conscious of having any at all should tell himself firmly that his ambitions are misdirected. Be he never so generally able and so accomplished as an actor, he will be wasting his talents in diplomacy and serving his country ill.

It need scarcely be added that heartiness and bluff bonhomie are as much out of place as coldness of temperament. A certain capacity for deception is needed in a diplomatist; but where it is needed is in the domain of ordinary good manners. Like everyone else who aspires to be socially welcome, he must keep a good deal of what he thinks to himself and say for the sake of politeness a good many unimportant things he does not mean. Above all he must constantly steer a course between extremes. Μηδὲν ἄγαν—nothing in excess—is not a very popular precept nowadays, and perhaps this is because of a tendency to confuse the moderate with

the tepid, but it remains none the less an excellent rule for the diplomatist. He must be intelligent, but carefully refrain from any oppressive display of intellectual powers. He must invariably be dignified, but must never be guilty of starchiness and pomposity. He must have humour (for that is fundamentally no more than a good sense of proportion), but if he also has wit he must usually keep the edge of it well sheathed for fear of wounding those without humour.

This brings us by a natural transition to the question of linguistic competence; for such competence is, in the diplomatist, a specialised branch of good manners as well as a by-product of sensitiveness to environment. 'Competence' is a better word here than 'ability' because, despite the general belief to the contrary, the learning of foreign languages is mainly a matter of hard work and is well within the powers of anyone who is not tone-deaf. It is true, of course, that some people have a greater gift for it than others; but it is not true that as a nation we are less than normally well endowed. Our widespread and deserved reputation for being bad linguists merely reflects the fact that we have less practical need than any other race to be good ones, and that consequently very little attention is paid in this country to the teaching of languages.

Since English is in a fair way to becoming the *lingua franca* of the world, certain contemporaries discoursing on the qualities needed in a British diplomatist have even gone so far as to deny the importance, for him, of linguistic proficiency. This curious standpoint is undoubtedly reinforced by an insular prejudice which almost all of us possess in some degree: the Englishman who hears a compatriot speaking a foreign language fluently is apt to regard him with deep suspicion as a mountebank with a shady past, or at any rate as a person distressingly indifferent to good form. It has even been contended quite seriously in some quarters that the British diplomatist should positively shun the acquisition of linguistic proficiency lest he become distrusted as an unrepresentative person by the foreigners with whom he deals. But this is to assume that our own prejudice is world-wide. It is not; and the British diplomatist can by no means afford to be narrowly insular in this or any other matter. His function of representing his countrymen abroad does not extend to the wilful personification of their minor failings and purely fortuitous idiosyncrasies. He has quite enough of these without acting a part. One might just as well assert that wherever he goes beyond the Channel he should drive his car firmly on the left-hand side of the road for fear of being credited with the flabby malleability of the *dépaycé*.

The very fact that English is in process of becoming the world's

auxiliary language imposes a special obligation on the British diplomatist to avoid any appearance of anticipating the event. He will not appreciably hasten its coming by behaving otherwise—his influence in such a matter is far too insignificant for that. And meanwhile no attitude is so well calculated to cause resentment, as that of the Englishman who appears to assume that foreigners everywhere must be capable of speaking his own language. The other nations do not at all willingly cede to us our privileged linguistic position: naturally enough, they do so grudgingly and only because force of circumstance—that is, the numerical preponderance of the 'Anglo-Saxon bloc'—compels them to; and the British diplomatist for his part should be at particular pains to avoid underlining what to others is an unwelcome though inevitable trend. He does, as has been said above, use English wherever possible in his official written communications, this being a practice which most foreign governments accept willingly enough. (To keep the balance even, most of them conduct their own side of such official correspondence in their own language, though a few use either English or French). But we are referring here to his less official intercourse with the people of the country in which he serves.

The active encouragement given nowadays to members of the Service to learn foreign languages shows that the Foreign Office does not share the insular views referred to above, common though they are. And the particular form of this encouragement shows also that linguistic attainments are held by those in charge of the Service to be at least as important from the point of view of good manners as from that of practical efficiency. It was stated in Chapter IV that allowances (for the senior or administrative branch) are granted for the effort to learn the more difficult languages only. But in such languages the normal member of the Foreign Service is never likely to acquire enough fluency to enable him to conduct a business conversation comfortably and without danger of serious misunderstandings. It takes at least six years of unremitting labour for the average European to master Chinese or Japanese at all thoroughly, and many other oriental languages are only a little less difficult. It may therefore be asked why public money should apparently be spent—and spent exclusively, at that—on the pursuit of the unattainable. The explanation is twofold. First, the man who serves for a couple of years or more in a country with an easy language, yet does not trouble to learn it since he is not paid to do so, must have both a poor sense of duty and a dull mind. Secondly, a little linguistic knowledge goes a very long way as a form of international politeness, particularly in the East. In many countries whose languages are hard, even the possession of a few score of carefully-chosen sen-



tences for use in ordinary social intercourse spells all the difference between one's being looked at askance as an uncouth barbarian and welcomed as a courteous foreigner.

But the aim should of course be considerably higher than that; and nowadays the allowances are not granted unless a tolerable degree of proficiency has been reached. (As we have seen in Chapter IV, proficiency in the hard languages is both facilitated by intensive training courses for prospective oriental specialists and encouraged in other ways.) It was not always so. There is an oft-told story, which may yet be worth repeating here, of the examination in former times of a young secretary serving at Cairo. He was asked how he would say to his servant in Arabic 'Come here'; and replied, correctly, *'Ta'âla hina'*. Next he was asked how, if his servant were standing beside him, he would tell him to go somewhere else. This floored him, but he remained undaunted. 'I think,' he replied, 'that I should go there and say "*Ta'âla hina*"'. It is alleged that he duly received his allowance; and it may well be that he acquired incidentally a good deal of local prestige, for the Egyptians appreciate gallantry and resource. Such qualities are indeed of greater value to the diplomatist than even the most complete familiarity with the horrid complexities of the Arabic verbal root in all its fourteen forms. But it is nevertheless of some practical importance to him to be linguistically competent; and he should not forget that even incompetent but honest trying brings great rewards, in terms of personal friendships, that are denied to him who uses an interpreter.

Anyone who writes about the attributes needed in a diplomatist and has not a great deal of space at his disposal finds himself obliged in the end to indicate that he has taken the possession of most of the known virtues for granted. Even Sir Harold Nicolson, that most broad-minded and least didactic of writers, does so—after giving a sufficiently intimidating catalogue of qualities required and of besetting diplomatic sins. In stipulating for integrity of mind as an essential quality, we are aware of having resorted to a portmanteau device for disposing of most if not all of the sins that he and others have enumerated. It is quite true, for example, that the outward pomp which still surrounds the diplomatist is all-too apt to make him personally vain, and that vanity begets a host of other serious faults. But one cannot be vain—nor succumb to that sense of superiority which the enjoyment of privilege can so easily induce—if one possesses that power of honest self-scrutiny which is an essential part of real integrity of mind. And the same goes, of course, for loyalty and for truthfulness in the most comprehensive sense. Even such a virtue as precision, which Sir Harold Nicolson rightly takes to include the avoidance of the faint-heartedly ambiguous and oracular as well

as mere accuracy of positive statement, is ensured to the possessor of moral integrity in the sense (which we have given) of honesty coupled with courage.

There is, however, one final virtue that must be specifically mentioned even in a list as short as this and even if it may logically be regarded as a derivative of integrity. That virtue is patience. Unless he is endowed in ample measure with this rather humdrum asset, the would-be diplomatist will never in reality become a diplomatist at all; for it is of the essence of the profession to plod endlessly on at tasks which are seldom simple nor quickly disposed of. Rapid and spectacular results cannot normally be hoped for in so intricate a business as the adjustment of conflicting interests between nations. Indeed they ought not even to be aimed at, for experience has shown that even when attainable they are, in the long term, almost always bad. The professional diplomatist must have no whit less of those qualities of patience and self-effacing regard for the distant future that a man has who in middle life plants, fences and waters a hardwood sapling.

## CHAPTER XII

### *Present Problems and Possible Future Trends*

A GOOD deal has been said in the preceding chapters about external factors which tend to make the work of the Foreign Service difficult, but little or nothing about internal and durable defects. The Service would be unique as a public institution if it were without any such defects. No doubt it has some; and to abstain from attempting to describe and analyse them here may be to court a charge of complacency. For a really sound diagnosis, however, two things are probably required: first, a thorough understanding of what the Service is today; and second, a perspective such as the outsider alone can enjoy. Clearly these two things are almost incompatible in practice. Moreover even if a man could be discovered who had both, he would find his judicial task particularly difficult at present. The extensive and mainly long-term reforms of 1943 have not so far had time to take full effect, and it will be some years yet before they do. These reforms, the product of much hard thinking within the Service, were designed to cure those of its defects of which the reformers themselves were conscious (within the limits, of course, of the amount of public money obtainable). The reformers did not imagine that they knew them all; but certainly it will be much easier to identify and discourse upon those they missed when there is full evidence of the results of what they set in train. Meanwhile it should not be assumed that the Service is sitting back and waiting passively for these results to appear. Internal reform on a modest scale and in matters of detail is constantly going on; and so is that nation-wide process of general educational reform which, as explained in Chapter IV, affects the Service most intimately by enabling it to broaden to an ever-increasing extent its field of choice in the recruitment of new entrants.

We have, then, to content ourselves for the most part with discussing problems rather than defects, however complacent that may seem. But there are certain problems which, through being unsolvable by the Service itself and remaining unsolved, are the source of at least potential defects. Unquestionably the chief of these is the problem of the delegation of responsibility. It is caused by the fact that the Foreign Secretary is held personally answerable to Parliament for everything that the Service is and does; and it is thus felt at all points in the chain of command down to the most junior secre-

taries. No doubt it is a problem that besets all government departments in some degree, for in each of them the superintending Minister is responsible to Parliament. But in no other, assuredly, is it so acute. A long line of Foreign Secretaries have referred to it despairingly in their memoirs and private papers as something which their Cabinet colleagues were largely spared; and most of these Foreign Secretaries had ample experience of other Departments of State. Some of them have defined its greater weight and irksomeness for themselves as being due to the fact that seemingly minor questions of foreign affairs are apt to boil up overnight into major ones; and this no doubt is true so far as it goes. But fundamentally the explanation lies in the essential difference of function between the Foreign Office (and Service) and almost all other Departments of State. An attempt to define that difference was made in the preface of this book. Almost all other Departments (cf. the footnote on the first page of the preface) give effect to policy mainly in a restricted field where the makers of it are sovereign and well-informed: the Foreign Service tries to give effect to policy in a much wider, largely uncontrollable and partly unknowable field. If what appear to be small problems in the domain of foreign affairs are peculiarly liable to boil up into larger ones, this is because they cannot be diagnosed as easily as internal problems, and because, even when they are correctly and promptly diagnosed, adequate action cannot always be taken to set them right.

In the result, although the sieving process described in Chapter VIII is designed to prevent the senior officers of the Department from being hopelessly swamped with paper, it is seldom completely effective. Not only the Secretary of State himself, but all his senior official helpers also, in proportion to their seniority, tend to be chronically overworked. Their juniors do not lack a normal endowment of initiative and self-reliance; but, as we have said above, the field in which they are called upon to operate is inherently less knowable, and thus more liable to spring surprises on the operators, than that of any branch of the internal administration. The problems that confront them from day to day are far less susceptible than those of most of the other Departments of State of being dealt with according to established precedents and well-tried routines. While therefore the juniors in the Foreign Service are always anxious to spare their seniors as much of the seemingly unimportant work as possible, they have constantly to bear in mind that in the attempt to do so they may be laying up for the latter what will prove to be worse troubles and more work in the long run.

There is no doubt about the almost permanent state of overwork of the Foreign Secretary and his principal lieutenants; and that this

state should continue indefinitely is clearly not in the public interest. It cannot fairly be said that the Service is inefficient today; and certainly it is a most willing self-immolator whenever the need arises. Nevertheless constant overstrain for the staff of any public institution is bound to tell in the long run, and to be bad for the nation's interests as a whole, by gradually impairing efficiency. And what is really disquieting is that, so far as one can foresee, the pressure must in fact continue to rise—if not indefinitely, at least for many years to come. It is not merely that in the present most uneasy state of the world's affairs there are constant and serious crises. The volume of affairs is of course swayed by such crises whenever they occur, but they merely form individual peaks in a graph-line which is not otherwise horizontal. The line is mounting irrespective of crises; and this is simply because, in an age of ever-improving communications, the pattern of international life cannot but grow more and more dense and intricate.

For well over a century the technological progress of mankind has been out-distancing his political evolution. It is making the nations of the world ever more interdependent, and this interdependence calls insistently for world-wide co-ordinating procedures such as must amount in the long term to supranational control. But politically speaking the world is not yet by any means ready for such control, though attempts are being made to feel the way towards it. And meanwhile technology will not wait. Time was when the physical barriers between the nations did much to lessen the dangers inherent in their political immaturity. Now the barriers are more than half down, and almost every scientific invention tends to lower them still further. In the political jungle there used at least to be plenty of room: today there is very little, and tomorrow there will be still less. The nations can no longer live apart, but they have not yet learnt to live together. Their growing interdependence in the economic sphere is a source of positive danger so long as it is not matched by a corresponding measure of political co-ordination. Nowadays one cannot manufacture so much as a dishcloth in England without affecting the pockets of peasants in Egypt and textile workers in Japan; yet both the production and the processing of the raw material remain largely subordinated to considerations of purely national politics. Meanwhile the surfaces of interaction are constantly multiplying. Aircraft already span the gaps between continents in a matter of hours, and guided missiles are capable of doing so in a matter of minutes. Day and night the ether is strident with the multilingual propaganda of scores of governments. As we have shown elsewhere, even the current experiments in international adjustment have in practice increased rather than decreased the

scope of political manœuvring of the older sort. Many states, nowadays, when they engage in quarrelling with their neighbours, feel the need to canvass voting support through their diplomatic agents in countries which are in no way directly concerned. In becoming smaller, the world has also become very much noisier.

To a certain type of idealist the conquest of space infallibly spells human as well as material progress, on the theory that to know is to like. And this theory is by no means wholly false. Racial prejudices do tend to break down under the impact of close acquaintance, and the cultural contacts between nations do on the whole promote tolerance and understanding. But to the realist the dangers of ever-increasing physical contact are unmistakable too. And not only the dangers, but also the sheer complexities as measured in terms of official inter-state relationships and diplomacy. So long as there is no really far-reaching renunciation of the principle of national sovereignty, and we are not overtaken by another world war with certainly cataclysmic but otherwise unpredictable consequences, diplomatic activity must go on increasing; and the road ahead seems to stretch a long way without a turning, for nationalism is still very much alive.

So inescapable is this process of ever-growing complexity in international relations that the amount of business which the Foreign Service has to deal with is likely to go on increasing. Expansion of staff, though sometimes inevitable, is no more than a partial solution to this problem. For it cannot relieve those at the top of the organisation in their problem of delegated responsibility: on the contrary, it augments the weight of it. The analogy of the pyramid, so serviceable hitherto, begins unaccountably to fail us here; for the fact is that the apex of a pyramidal structure of the administrative kind becomes the more uncomfortable to occupy, the more gently the sides of the structure slope. Also, the force of gravity appears to press upwards. Certain it is that the burden for those at the top increases with every new department of the Foreign Office or branch of the Service that is added in order to meet some fresh need. Moreover the improvement of communications, coupled with the general progress of education, is bound to heighten the practical effects of the Foreign Secretary's responsibility in another way, by fostering public interest in foreign affairs: parliamentary questions about these affairs may well become more numerous and searching, parliamentary debate more frequent and animated. In these circumstances it is indeed hard to see how any one man's shoulders can be broad enough for the weight that is likely to be placed upon them. And although the Secretary of State's burden is of course heavier than that of any of his Service advisers, theirs

is heavy now and will increase in proportion as his increases.

This greatest of all current problems for the Foreign Service has not yet been solved, and obviously cannot be solved by the Service itself. Nor, so far as we are aware, has any real solution been so much as mooted. It is true that a number of suggestions have been put forward from time to time for which the claim has been made that their adoption would afford relief to the man at the top. It is also true that, in certain foreign countries, variants on a system purporting to do so are already in operation. But that system does not, to the outside observer, seem very promising. It is the system of the parliamentary committee on foreign affairs; and the manner in which some of the already existing committees in other countries make their influence felt is not, to say the least of it, well calculated to encourage us to follow suit. At the best, all these alleged solutions of the problem consist of attempts to help the man at the top to do his own thinking; they do not relieve him of the duty of doing it, nor of responsibility for the results of such part of the thinking as he may perforce leave to others. The weight under which he labours being caused by the sheer bulk of the material which has to be thought about, it is not sensibly decreased by a multiplying of advisers.

At any given moment there are a certain number of problems which seem to be of sufficient importance to call for decision at a certain level. If the man at that level is not to be swamped, those below him must marshal the facts of each problem and tender advice, compressing their submission into just as much written and oral explanation as he has time for in a long working day. The process of marshalling is in itself an act which involves the taking of responsibility in his name: there must be selection, with suppression of the seemingly inessential; arrangement of the remainder; apportioning of emphasis—in short, pre-digestion up to a point. Any increase in the number of problems calling for decision must be dealt with in one of two ways. One cannot merely increase by the same amount the volume of the material which the deciding authority has to cope with, for that would overstrain his capacity. Consequently one must either go on putting all the material before him, but in a still more pre-digested form which deprives him of the possibility of taking his decisions in full knowledge of what each problem is about, or alternatively deal with some of the material at a level lower than his. The first alternative forces him to act in a semi-darkness extending over the whole range of his operations; the second, while enabling him to act with just sufficient illumination in one sector, renders him responsible in another for acts which are no-wise his own.

There is, in theory, no limit to the extent to which the base of the pyramid can be broadened to cope with increasing work by adding to the number of advisers, whether inside or outside the Foreign Service—and for most purposes of advice it is better to rely on those inside, since professional experience is of some value. Such broadening must, in fact, take place whenever the work does increase. But so long as the pyramidal structure of authority and responsibility is retained, and all the lines leading upwards converge, the problem presented by the two alternatives mentioned above remains unsolved for the man at the apex of the whole—and equally for those at each of the lesser apices within the whole. The Foreign Secretary, as the man at the very top, cannot be exempted from ultimate responsibility for any matter relating to the conduct of foreign affairs, since these affairs must be managed as a co-ordinated whole. And of course even he himself, though at the apex of the Foreign Service pyramid, is below the Prime Minister as ultimate co-ordinator of all policies both external and internal. Certainly the multiplication of advisory brains for considering the best courses of action will tend, given adequate co-ordination at all levels, to produce the soundest sum-total of advice. But that sum-total may still be too large for digestion by the recipient of it, or alternatively too much compressed to permit of his taking decisions with adequate knowledge. There still remains, in fact, the problem created by the natural limitations to the capacity of a single brain. Since in the last analysis the affairs of any one nation must be dealt with as an undivided whole if the best results are to be achieved, there cannot be division of ultimate responsibility without loss of efficiency due to imperfect co-ordination. But from this it follows that if the relations between states grow much more complicated than they already are it will need a race of supermen to cope with them at the top.

Apart from this major problem, there are a number of visible imperfections in the Foreign Service organisation that are due quite simply to lack of money. In the devising of the 1943 reforms the Service did not, of course, have *carte blanche*. Many things could still be done to improve the conduct of affairs in this vital sphere of the nation's interests if the means were there to augment the staff of the Service at weak points and to increase the efficiency of the existing staff by improving some of its material conditions. Most of these things would, by ordinary business criteria, rank as eminently sound investments if the capital were available; and for some at least of them it certainly ought to be found. But discussion of them lies outside the scope of a book intended to treat of the realities of the present time, for among these realities is the need for stringent economy in all kinds of official spending.



But every government service and institution is no doubt equally convinced that it could do better if it had more money to spend; and there is no need to end this account of the Foreign Service on a gloomy note merely because the completion of certain reforms and material improvements must wait for financially easier times. The life led and the work done by its members are a good life and a good work now, notwithstanding the growing harassment of affairs and the continuing financial stringency. To the intellectually and socially active man (and woman) they offer many attractions, not the least of which is that extreme diversity which has rendered the descriptive task so difficult. The Foreign Service officer sees a good deal of the world; and in the process of doing so he is able to serve his own country and the cause of world peace to some purpose. He would be both personally and professionally helped if the nature of his calling were better understood. If we have succeeded in making it a little more so, we shall consider the effort well repaid.

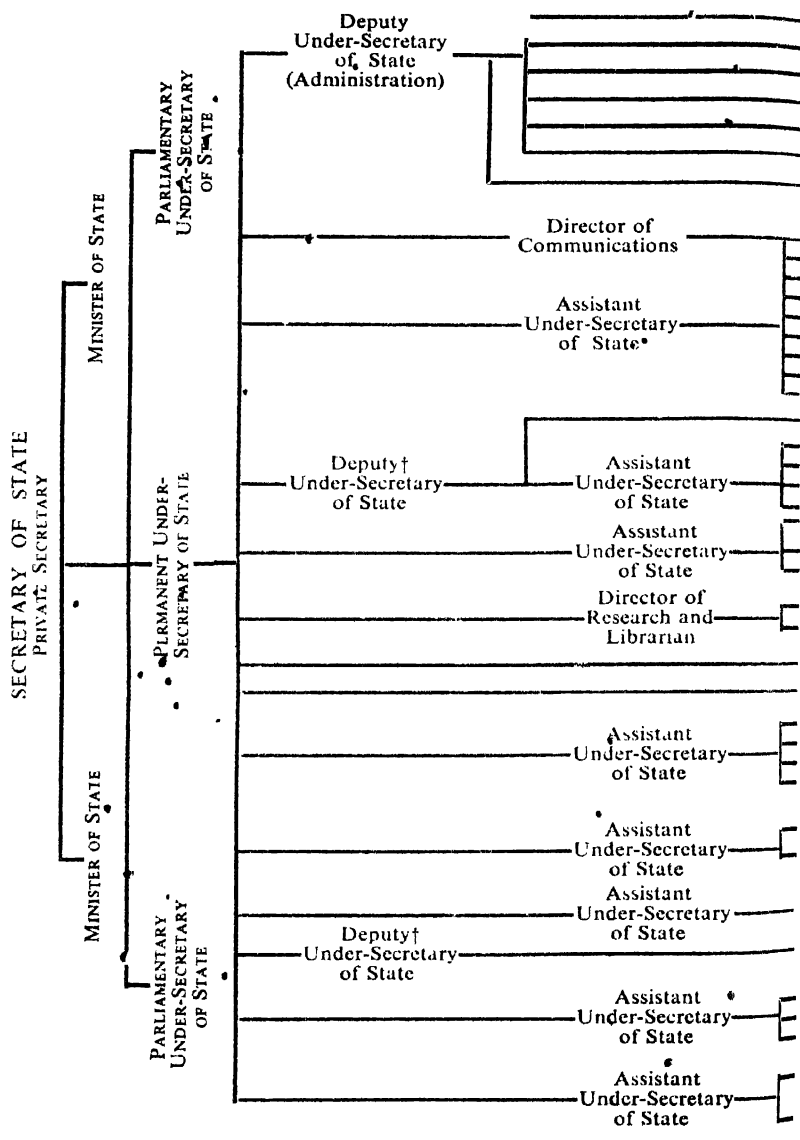


## *Appendices*

# APPENDIX 1

## The Foreign Office Departmental Structure

Organisation at October, 1954.



† In addition to supervising their Departments, the Deputy Under-Secretaries represent the Foreign Office on senior Interdepartmental Committees and one of them is the United Kingdom representative on the Permanent Commission of the Brussels Treaty Organisation. The Deputy Under-Secretaries also undertake special tasks by arrangement with the Permanent Under-Secretary and deputise for him when necessary.

1. Personnel Department
2. Establishment and Organisation Department
3. Conference and Supply Department
4. Finance Department
5. German Section Establishment and Organisation Department
6. German Section Personnel and General Department
7. Corps of Inspectors

#### Communications Department

9. Archives Department
10. Claims Department
11. Consular Department
12. Passport Control Department
13. Passport Office
14. Protocol Department
15. Treaty and Nationality Department
16. American Department
17. Western Organisations Department ‡
18. Economic Relations Department
19. Mutual Aid Department
20. General Department
21. † United Nations (Economic and Social) Department (Economic)  
‡ United Nations (Economic and Social) Department (Political)
22. United Nations (Political) Department
23. Northern Department
24. Research Department
25. Library
26. Legal Advisers
27. News Department
28. Cultural Relations Department
29. Information Policy Department
30. Information Research Department
31. German Information Department
32. Security Department
33. Permanent Under-Secretary's Department
34. Southern Department
35. Western Department
36. African Department
37. Eastern Department
38. Levant Department
39. Far Eastern Department
40. South-East Asia Department

‡ The head of Western Organisations Department reports on European questions and the non-defence aspects of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation through the Deputy Under-Secretary of State in charge of Western Department.

In principle, the Deputy and Assistant Under-Secretaries report through the Permanent Under-Secretary. In practice, they have direct access to the Secretary of State when the expeditious conduct of business so requires.

## APPENDIX II

### *Departmental Allocation of Work, October, 1954.*

#### *General Introductory Note:*

The table that follows is not intended to be anything more than a very rough guide: a fuller treatment, unless so full as to be quite unduly long, would misleadingly suggest the existence of much unco-ordinated overlapping of functions. It is indeed hardly necessary to explain that almost any question handled primarily by the Economic Relations Department is of direct concern to one or more of the 'geographical' departments also; that the affairs of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe must be largely a shared subject between the United Nations (Economic and Social) Department and the Mutual Aid Department; and so forth. But in many less self-explanatory matters too there is much sharing of work between departments, and the methods of it cannot be shown in any tolerably concise table. For instance, the preparation of what are known as 'Full Powers' in connexion with the signing of treaties, though noted below as a function of the Treaty and Nationality Department only, is in reality a complicated procedural business shared between that department, the Protocol Department and the Library. The reader must, in fact, be asked to assume the existence of many inter-departmental co-ordinating procedures, designed precisely, to eliminate overlapping, which cannot be indicated here for lack of space.

#### 1. PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State, where necessary on the broad policy to be adopted in regard to the matters listed below and apply it in particular cases: recruitment, appointment and posting of all personnel employed under the Foreign Office at home or abroad, except in so far as this has been delegated to Heads of Departments and posts; liaison with the Civil Service Commission, Ministry of Labour and other Departments in connexion therewith; training and refresher courses; personal records and reports; selection for transfer; promotion boards and promotion procedure generally; welfare; disciplinary questions; authorisation of leave; retirement; staff lists; honours for British subjects on the Foreign Office lists.

#### 2. ESTABLISHMENT AND ORGANISATION DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State where necessary on the broad policy to be adopted in regard to the matters listed below and apply it in particular cases. Fixing of staff complements, gradings, salaries, wages, allowances and payments thereof; leave, sick leave, and other conditions of service; Whitley Council procedure; superannuation, office organisation and management generally. (Responsibility does not extend to German Section and Control Service).

#### 3. CONFERENCE AND SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

Are responsible for administrative arrangements in connexion with international conferences in this country, and in respect of United

Kingdom Delegations to conferences abroad. Responsible for travel arrangements for members of the Foreign Service, for officials of other Government Departments when required, and in response to special requests for assistance from Foreign Diplomatic Missions in London: reception and despatch of members of Foreign Governments and other distinguished visitors. Responsible for buildings and supplies at overseas Posts, home and overseas vehicles. Foreign Office accommodation and printing and stationery.

#### 4. FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Collaborate with other Departments of the Foreign Office in the formulation of policy involving expenditure from Foreign Office Votes (including Vote for British Council), arrange for provision of funds, control expenditure; furnish proof that expenditure has been incurred only as authorised by Parliament, are responsible for the general management of Foreign Office Votes thereby rendered necessary. Exercise certain functions of Exchange Control as it affects our Foreign Service and Foreign Service posts.

#### 5. GERMAN SECTION ESTABLISHMENTS AND ORGANISATION DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on the broad policy to be pursued in regard to the matters listed below and apply it in particular cases.

Complement and grading of posts in the United Kingdom High Commission in Germany. Conditions of service and payment of salaries, wages and allowances for the staff in Germany.

Estimates and control of expenditure from the Vote, Exchange Control.

#### 6. GERMAN SECTION PERSONNEL AND GENERAL DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on the broad policy to be pursued in regard to the matters listed below and apply it in particular cases.

Personnel administration of the staff in Germany (including appoint-

ments, promotions, discipline and terminations). Administrative services in Germany (including accommodation and transport). Welfare. Whitley Council procedure. Personal records and returns.

Home establishments and office services for the German Section (including Wilton Park and Archives, Hayes).

#### 7. CODES OF INSPECTORS

Inspect Foreign Service establishments at home and abroad, and advise the Secretary of State through the Assistant Under-Secretary of State in charge of Administration on the emoluments, staffing and the general working of the Foreign Service.

#### 8. COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Are responsible for the reception, despatch and general control of communications from and to Foreign Service posts abroad, for all matters arising out of the use of code and cipher; for the automatic distribution of telegrams within the Foreign Office and to Ministers and other Government Departments for all matters relating to telephones (except at Foreign Service posts abroad); for the control of all bag services to and from Foreign Service posts abroad; and for the administration of the Queen's Foreign Service Messenger and Home Service Messenger Services.

#### 9. ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT

Are responsible for classifying and recording current correspondence, submitting it to the executive Department, circulating the papers ensuring that the action decided on is carried out and recorded and finally keeping it so that it may be readily available when required.

#### 10. CLAIMS DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State and take appropriate action on claims of British individuals and juridical persons against foreign Governments and on claims against H.M. Government by foreign Governments arising out of grievances of foreign individuals and juridical persons. Seek

to ensure that the Peace Treaties to be imposed on enemy Governments shall provide restitution or compensation to British individuals and juridical persons for war damage, loss and injury, and that the benefits of any war damage legislation in Allied or liberated territory shall be extended to them.

#### 11. CONSULAR DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on the broad policy to be adopted in regard to the matters listed below; advise where necessary the Secretary of State and other departments of the Foreign Office on proposed action concerning particular problems arising out of these matters, and take appropriate action in regard thereto.

Consular functions, practices and conventions. Consular rights and immunities. Consular fees. Services performed by Consuls for other Government Departments and other bodies or individuals. Naval Courts. Care of British subjects and interests including British Communities, Institutions and Shipping. Repatriation and relief of British subjects abroad. Imperial War Graves Commission cemeteries and graves, and civilian cemeteries in foreign countries; Geneva Conventions for the Protection of victims of war. Registration of British subjects abroad.

#### 12. PASSPORT CONTROL DEPARTMENT

Organise and administer the staff and work of the Passport Control Offices abroad, and issue them the necessary instructions as to the manner in which their work shall be undertaken (these officers abroad are concerned with the grant of British visas to foreigners wishing to enter this country, and other parts of the British Empire). Examine, in consultation with the Government Departments interested, applications for British visas referred to London from abroad.

#### 13. PASSPORT OFFICE

Consider applications for the issue, renewal or endorsement of British passports. Issue travel identity cards (valid for travelling to Ireland), under the authority of the Home Secretary.

Consider application for Collective Certificates, in lieu of separate passports for approved parties. Consider applications from aliens resident in the U.K. for the grant of visas to enable them to enter British territory overseas, or for the grant of United Kingdom visas to enable them to re-enter this country. Obtain from foreign representatives in London visas to enable British Government Officials and others travelling on Government business, to proceed abroad. Provide H.M. Consular Officers abroad with the material necessary for the issue of passports.

#### 14. PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on the broad policy to be adopted in regard to the matters listed below; advise in the light of present Government policy, the Secretary of State and other departments of the Foreign Office, on proposed action concerning particular problems arising out of these matters.

Questions concerning credentials. Full Powers, and Commissions. Foreign Consular appointments in H.M. Dominions, Royal matters. British Honours for foreigners and vice versa. Diplomatic privilege in its many and varied aspects. Questions of ceremonial, precedence and uniforms. Formal procedure in British Commonwealth foreign relations.

#### 15. TREATY AND NATIONALITY DEPARTMENT

Examine draft treaties to ensure that they are correct in form and attend to the formalities of their signature and ratification.

Advise the Secretary of State on the broad policy to be adopted in regard to the matters listed below. Advise where necessary other departments of the Foreign Office on the proposed action concerning particular problems arising out of these matters and take appropriate action in regard thereto.

Nationality and Naturalisation. Status of British Protected Persons. Registration of births and deaths of British subjects in foreign countries. Estates of deceased British subjects. Legalisation of documents. Notarial



acts. Civil Procedure Conventions. Requests for the taking of evidence and service of writs. Extradition. Questions concerning the Foreign Enlistment Act. Marriages of British subjects abroad. Deportations. Questions concerning foreign lunatics. Questions concerning passports and visas.

Issue instructions in the light of present Government policy to the Passport Office and the Passport Control Department as to the executive action to be taken by them.

#### 16. AMERICAN DEPARTMENT

As for African Department (see 36) but for all countries in North, Central and South America (and their possessions), including Canada (for matters affecting the Foreign Office), Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the Panama Canal Zone.

#### 17. WESTERN ORGANISATIONS DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on matters relating to the Brussels Treaty, the North Atlantic Treaty and the Council of Europe, the European Defence Community and the European Political Authority. Are responsible for Foreign Office liaison with the special machinery established under these instruments.

#### 18. ECONOMIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on general economic and financial questions affecting our relations with foreign countries and on the following particular questions: overseas monetary payments and trade negotiations, International Monetary Fund, exchange control, commercial policy, International Trade Organisation and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, international commodity arrangements; oil questions, arms exports, economic development, International Bank, Food and Agricultural Organisation, international investment, international full employment. Co-ordinate the economic work of the Foreign Office and act as a point of contact for the Departments of H.M. Government concerned with economic or financial matters so as to

give them the views of the Foreign Office as a whole on such matters.

#### 19. MUTUAL AID DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on the policy to be adopted in the following matters:

Economic co-operation in Europe generally; The Organisation for European Economic Co-operation; The Economic Commission for Europe; The European Coal and Steel Community; The Council of Europe (economic); The N.A.T.O. (economic); American economic and military assistance to Europe; Security export controls, Migration and Manpower questions.

#### 20. GENERAL DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on the broad policy to be adopted in regard to the subjects listed below; advise, in the light of present Government policy, the Secretary of State and other Departments of the Foreign Office, on action concerning particular problems arising out of these subjects.

Civil Aviation, Shipping, Inland transport and communications, Telecommunications, Postal Services, Meteorology, Safety of Life at Sea, Fishing Conventions, International Locust Control.

#### 21. UNITED NATIONS (ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL) DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on the broad policy to be adopted in regard to the following matters and take appropriate action in conformity therewith. The United Nations Organisation — international social and labour questions, Economic and Social Council, the relationship of inter-governmental agencies with the United Nations; international non-governmental organisations; the Inter-departmental Steering Committee on international organisations; United Nations documents, Refugees, displaced and stateless persons.

#### 22. UNITED NATIONS (POLITICAL) DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on the broad policy to be adopted in

regard to the following matters and take appropriate action in conformity therewith: The United Nations; general policy, co-ordination and advice to other Departments, except on economic, social, and labour questions; application of the Charter in political matters; machinery, procedure, administration and Secretariat of the Organisation; organisation of international security under the Charter; International Court of Justice; control and regulation of armaments; trusteeship; Atomic Energy Commission; Assembly matters.

### 23. NORTHERN DEPARTMENT

As for African Department (see 36) but for the countries listed below. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Roumania, Soviet Union and Sweden

### 24. RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Collect from unofficial as well as official sources, and verify, digest and present facts, over the whole field of foreign affairs, for the use of the Secretary of State, for Foreign Office (all Departments), H.M. Missions abroad, and other Government Departments and official organisations. The principal forms in which this material is presented are minutes and memoranda produced *ad hoc* in response to particular requests or inquiries.

### 25. LIBRARY

Advise the Secretary of State on all matters concerning the arrangement, custody, production and publication of Foreign Office correspondence. Provide background information and precedents to all departments of the Foreign Office by the production of registered papers and the writing of memoranda and minutes. Guide the Foreign Service at home and abroad on questions of office procedure. Edit and issue Foreign Service Instructions and the Office Order Book. Act as the Custodian of all Treaties, keep a record of all Treaties to which H.M. Government are a party, and advise where these apply; record all other Treaties published or reported

to the Foreign Office. Prepare Parliamentary and other publications including British and Foreign State Papers. Maintain and augment the Library of Printed Books, control distribution and answer queries or make searches on special points. Foster Chancery Libraries abroad. Answer enquiries from foreign sources as to British laws, institutions, etc., arrange for facilities in connexion with scientific and other investigations, and acquire similar information from foreign countries for all Government Departments. Arrange exchanges of official publications with foreign Governments. Supply printed books, works of reference, maps and official publications to the Foreign Office and Foreign Service posts abroad; supply British and foreign newspapers and periodicals to the Foreign Office. Bring to the notice of the relevant Department of the Foreign Office all Parliamentary questions to be answered by or of interest to the Foreign Office, and supply copies of Hansard. Deal with International Conferences, Organisations and Bureaux of a non-political and non-commercial nature and with certain international health questions. Undertake various forms of special historical work. Administer the custody and publication of the German Foreign Ministry archives and the publication of Documents on British Foreign Policy.

### 26. LEGAL ADVISERS

Advise the Secretary of State and the various departments of the Foreign Office on all legal matters affecting the work of the Foreign Office; advise any Department of H.M. Government on problems involving international law or questions arising out of international treaties and agreements. Draft, or supervise the drafting of, all international treaties and agreements, in the negotiation of which H.M. Government are participating, including those which are principally the concern of some Department other than the Foreign Office. Advise on the manner in which cases before international courts and tribunals and involving

H.M. Government should be conducted and, where necessary, conduct such cases. Attend international conferences as Legal Advisers to the United Kingdom delegation, and act as delegates when required. Draft Orders in Council or Regulations for which the Foreign Office is responsible: instruct Parliamentary Counsel in connexion with Foreign Office Bills and generally assist with regard to this matter: prepare cases for the Opinion of the Law Officers and generally form the medium of communication between the Foreign Office and the Law Officers.

## 27. NEWS DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State and the Political Departments of the Foreign Office on development of public opinion in regard to British Foreign Policy and upon questions of publicity related to it. Act as the authorised contact between the Foreign Office and the home, foreign, and foreign press, and the Home and Overseas and European News services of the B.B.C. Present and explain the British point of view on current international questions and provide relevant factual information the content of this purpose close relations are maintained with British diplomatic correspondents and foreign journalists stationed in London and with representatives of the Press at important international conferences. (All Foreign Office communications and official written statements are issued through the medium of the News Department)

## 28. CULTURAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State and other Departments of the Foreign Office on all matters of cultural or educational interest. Advise the Secretary of State as to the policy to be adopted by the British Council in their work and expenditure. Issue instructions to the British Council in accordance with the policy laid down by the Secretary of State and the requirements of other Departments of the Foreign Office and of the Treasury. Advise the Secretary of State upon the implementation of

Article III (the Cultural Clause) of the Brussels Treaty and provide personnel for attending the meetings of the numerous Sub-Committees of the Cultural Committee of the Brussels Treaty Powers. Advise the Secretary of State upon the Cultural work of other international bodies of which H.M. Government is a member (e.g. Council of Europe, U.N.E.S.C.O.)

## 29. INFORMATION POLICY DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on publicity and information work in foreign countries, have as their main task to ensure that Information Services in those countries are so operated as best to help the foreign policy of H.M. Government, and to provide Information Officers with the facts and intelligence about current issues necessary to their work; are responsible for Foreign Office relations with the overseas services of the British Broadcasting Corporation and, together with the Information Services Department, for co-ordinating Foreign Office demands on the Central Office of Information; represent the Foreign Office in inter-departmental committees concerned with overseas information work, and conduct certain ancillary Information activities such as the arrangement of conducted tours by leaders of foreign opinion to this country.

Are responsible for the provision of publicity material of all kinds for Information Officers abroad and for Foreign Office relation with the Central Office of Information; are also responsible for ensuring that publicity material produced by the Central Office of Information conforms with Foreign Office policy and is of a nature to assist Information Officers as fully as possible in their work; provide facilities for trade and tourist publicity in conjunction with the Board of Trade and other Departments and bodies.

## 30. INFORMATION RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Research and provision of material on special subjects.

### 31. GERMAN INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State on the policy to be pursued in regard to the following matters in relation to Germany; give guidance on these matters on behalf of the Secretary of State to the British authorities in Germany and Austria; Educational and Religious Affairs; Youth Affairs; Juvenile Delinquency; Physical Training and Sports; Women's Affairs; Adult Education; Teacher Training; Universities.

Arrange educational courses in the United Kingdom for German educationalists, V.I.P.s., etc.

Administer the Wilton Park Training Centre for German students, etc., brought to United Kingdom.

Arrange visits to Germany of British persons from various walks of life, to lecture to German population.

Arrange for the supply to Germany of educational books, periodicals, films, etc.

Give guidance on information matters in Germany and Austria. Supply features, articles, etc., to those countries. Despatch of information material. Arrange information visits to and from Germany and Austria.

### 32. SECURITY DEPARTMENT

Collate information and provide directives on all security matters concerning the Foreign Service. Advise on and ensure execution of measures arising therefrom, where necessary by inspection of posts abroad. Initiate action in regard to the personal safety of the Secretary of State. Are responsible for Foreign Office Security Control, passes, safes and security equipment in Foreign Office and at Foreign Service posts abroad. Supply Foreign Office Representatives on Cabinet and Chiefs of Staff Security Committees.

### 33. PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT

Maintain liaison with the Ministry of Defence and the Chiefs of Staff; represent the Foreign Office on certain Inter-Service Committees, in particular the Joint Intelligence and Joint Planning Staff sub-committees

of the Chiefs of Staff. Coordinate exchange of scientific information. Provide the secretariat of the Permanent Under-Secretary's Committee which consists in the main of Under-Secretaries of the Foreign Office and has as its object to consider long-term questions of foreign policy and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State when appropriate.

### 34. SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT

As for African Department (see 36) but for the countries listed below:

Albania; Austria; Greece; Italy; Portugal; Spain; Trieste; Turkey; Vatican; Yugoslavia.

### 35. WESTERN DEPARTMENT

As for African Department (see 36) but for the countries listed below: Belgium; France; Germany; Irish Republic; Luxembourg; Netherlands and Switzerland.

Give instructions and guidance on behalf of the Secretary of State, where appropriate in consultation with or through other departments of the Foreign Office, to the United Kingdom High Commissioner in Germany on relations with the German Federal Government, on Berlin and on the exercise of the powers reserved to the Occupation Authorities under the Occupation Statute, including questions arising out of the presence of Her Majesty's Forces in Germany, war criminals, and certain financial and economic questions.

### 36. AFRICAN DEPARTMENT

Advise the Secretary of State as to the policy to be followed in regard to the political, economic and other relations between this country and the countries listed below; study and analyse the reports received from H.M. Representatives and from other sources relating to developments, political and other, in the countries concerned; issue instructions on behalf of the Secretary of State, where appropriate in consultation with or through other departments of the Foreign Office, to H.M. Representatives in these countries; maintain

relations with the representatives of these countries in the United Kingdom; take any other action appropriate to the Foreign Office in regard to the above matters.

Countries: Egypt; Anglo-Egyptian Sudan; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Libya; Africa (general); French, Belgian, Portuguese and Spanish possessions in Africa; Tangier and Liberia.

#### 37. EASTERN DEPARTMENT

As for African Department (see 36) but for the countries listed below: Persia, the Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia, the Yemen.

#### 38. LEVANT DEPARTMENT

As for African Department (see 36) but for the countries listed below: Iraq, Israel, Jordan, the Lebanon and Syria. Provide the Secretariat for Inter-departmental Committee on Middle Eastern Affairs; are the normal channel of communication with the British Middle East Office in Cairo; deal with questions affecting Economic and Social Development in the Middle East, and recruitment of technical experts for Middle Eastern

territories and the defence of the Middle East.

#### 39. FAR EASTERN DEPARTMENT

As for African Department (see 36) but for the countries listed below: Japan, China, Korea, and Tibet.

#### 40. SOUTH EAST ASIA DEPARTMENT

As for African Department (see 36) but for the countries listed below:

Thailand, the Associated States of Indo-China (i.e., Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia), Indonesia, Nepal, Tibet, Afghanistan, Burma, the Philippines, French and Portuguese possessions in India; matters affecting the Foreign Office (e.g., United Nations affairs) relating to Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Ceylon.

The South East Asia Department is also responsible for matters affecting the foreign political side of the Commission-General, Singapore, and the co-ordination of political and administrative questions and of food production and distribution in South East Asia. It is also responsible, jointly with the Colonial Office, for the Affairs of the South Pacific Commission, and general Pacific questions.

## *Proposals for the Reform of the Foreign Service*

(*White Paper of January, 1943, Cmd. 6420*)<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

1. In a statement in the House of Commons on the 11th June, 1941, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs announced the intention of His Majesty's Government to introduce a series of reforms, designed to create a combined Foreign Service distinct from the Home Civil Service, to broaden the field of entry into the new Service, and to increase its efficiency by facilitating the retirement on pension of men who prove unfitted for the highest posts. Reforms so wide in their scope cannot all be operative until after the war. Nevertheless, the interest of Parliament in the proposed reforms has been great, and it has been decided to submit an outline, necessarily incomplete and liable to modification in detail, of the proposals for a new Foreign Service and, in particular, to seek forthwith Parliament's approval of a Pensions Bill for the purpose to which the Foreign Secretary alluded in his statement.

2. Among the criticisms which have been brought against the Diplomatic Service the view has been expressed that it is recruited from too small a circle, that it tends to represent the interests of certain sections of the nation rather than those of the country as a whole, that its members lead too sheltered a life, that they have insufficient understanding of economic and social questions, that the extent of their experience is too small to enable them properly to understand many of the problems with which they ought to deal, and that the range of their contacts is too limited to allow them to acquire more than a relatively narrow acquaintance with the foreign peoples amongst whom they live.

3. These criticisms are often overstated and some of them have their origin in a misunderstanding of the functions of the Diplomatic Service. These functions are, broadly, to represent His Majesty's Government in foreign countries and to be their channel of communication with foreign Governments; to protect British interests; and to promote good relations with foreign countries. The diplomat must be able to keep His Majesty's Government informed of developments which may affect their foreign policy, submitting his observations and advice, which may or may not be accepted. While a diplomat may therefore be able to influence foreign policy by his reports, he does not finally determine it. That is the task of the Cabinet. The art of diplomacy consists in making the policy of His Majesty's Government, whatever it may be, understood and, if possible, accepted by other countries. The success or failure of our foreign policy should not therefore be attributed to the Diplomatic Service alone.

4. It is, however, true that the conditions which the Diplomatic Service originally grew up to meet no longer exist unchanged in modern international affairs. Economics and finance have become inextricably interwoven with politics; an understanding of social problems and labour movements is indispensable in forming a properly balanced judgment of world events. The modern diplomat should have a more intimate understanding of these special problems and greater opportunities to study them than he has usually possessed in the past. His training and experience must be wider. By introducing the reforms hereinafter described it is intended to re-equip the Foreign

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced by kind permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

Service to meet modern conditions and to create a Service which, by its composition, by the recruitment and training of its members and by its organisation, shall be better able not merely to represent the interests of the nation as a whole, but also to deal with the whole range of international affairs, political, social and economic, and so constitute an adequate instrument for the maintenance of good relations and mutual understanding between the United Kingdom and other countries.

5. It is a fact, too, that the efficiency of the Foreign Service has suffered in the past from the lack of flexibility which arises from the disparity in conditions of service as between posts at home and posts abroad. Conditions of service in the Foreign Office have been assimilated to those of the Home Civil Service. Members of the Diplomatic Service who are posted abroad, on the other hand, have been treated on a different basis in regard to conditions of service, pension rights, etc. The Secretary of State has not been free, in practice, to move a man from a Mission abroad to a post in the Foreign Office without consideration of the effect which such a transfer might have upon the individual concerned. The efficiency of the Service has undoubtedly suffered in consequence. The new combined Foreign Service, accordingly, will be entirely separated from the Home Civil Service and will be treated as a self-contained and distinct service of the Crown.

6. The present distinction between the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, the Commercial Diplomatic Service and the Consular Service will disappear and the three branches will be amalgamated in the new Foreign Service. This amalgamation will take place immediately. So far as is practicable, exchange of personnel will be effected between the three branches, but, as present members of the Diplomatic Service have not been trained in commercial and consular affairs and *vice versa*, it is not in the national interest that posts in the three branches of the Service should at once become completely interchangeable in practice. It will not be until new entrants have received the training necessary to fit them for all three types of post that amalgamation will become complete. In the meantime, moreover, be difficult to justify compelling members of the present Services to accept, against their will, posts in a Service other than that which they joined. All future entrants will join a combined Foreign Service and all will receive similar training, not merely in languages and history, but also in economic and commercial affairs. The system of recruitment will be recast so as to facilitate the entry, from any social sphere, of candidates with suitable qualifications by enabling them to obtain the necessary vocational training at the expense of the State. Uniformity of career for all will be impossible and is, indeed, undesirable, for some officers will prove more fitted for work in the Foreign Office and in diplomatic posts and others for commercial or consular work. What is aimed at is wider training and equality of opportunity for all. Every officer of the combined Service will be called upon to serve in consular and commercial diplomatic as well as in diplomatic posts and in the Foreign Office and will have the opportunity of rising to the highest posts. Interchange between the different branches and between posts at home and those abroad, will be facilitated with the object of giving every man as wide an experience as possible and of enabling the best man to be sent to any vacant post. This will involve some adjustment of the present disproportion in the number of the diplomatic and consular posts and a regrading of certain posts at home and abroad.

7. The effects of the new system of recruitment and training which is contemplated will not, of course, be felt for some years after its introduction. On the cessation of hostilities, however, the new Service will be faced with a problem which will demand an immediate solution. For a number of years there will have been no new entry. At the top of the Service there will be men who have stayed at their posts during the war against their inclination and who will wish to retire to make room for younger men. The Foreign Service will be understaffed while the tasks which face it will have multiplied. It will be necessary, therefore, to make special arrangements for recruitment

pending the introduction of the new system of recruitment and training described below. A scheme of special entry to meet the demands of the Service during the reconstruction period immediately after the war is now being worked out. It is probable that this scheme will be based primarily on the candidate's record of service during the war and on his showing before an interviewing board rather than on a written examination or academic qualifications. It will be desirable, too, that the scheme should cover, as far as possible, those age groups which, but for the war, would have been represented in the Service to-day.

8. The proposed reforms would be incomplete and perhaps ineffective if they did not extend to the subordinate ranks upon whom the efficient performance of the work of the Service must largely depend. At present members of the subordinate branches in the Foreign Office do not belong to the Foreign Service. Either they form part of the Home Civil Service or they are temporarily recruited at home or abroad. Those who are members of the Home Civil Service are not liable for service abroad, although they can and do volunteer for it, and those recruited locally on an unestablished basis are not pensionable. This system is objectionable from every point of view. To rely to any large extent upon unestablished and non-pensionable elements does not make for efficiency and is unfair to those concerned. It is not intended to exclude the employment of temporary clerical labour nor that of locally recruited staff when required in posts abroad, but it is most undesirable that confidential papers should be handled by those who are not members of the Service and whose interests are not bound up with it. Finally, the fact that essential services in the Foreign Office are not part of the Foreign Service creates an artificial division between the various branches of the Service, and between home and foreign posts, which restricts free interchange of personnel and hampers efficiency and the development of that *esprit de corps* which must exist in any healthy organisation. It has therefore been decided that the new Foreign Service shall include employees of the subordinate ranks who are established and therefore pensionable and whose work and qualifications are such as enable them to be employed both at home and abroad.

\* 9. It is necessary to emphasise that, in the Foreign Service, a great measure of direct personal responsibility rests on senior officers, especially abroad. Experience has shown that some men, who are entirely satisfactory in the early years of their service, either do not fulfil their promise or lose the qualities of initiative and energy which are necessary if they are to hold positions of greater responsibility. It is therefore essential that the Foreign Secretary should be able to terminate, by retirement on pension, the careers of men who, though they may have been excellent subordinates, are unsuited to fill the highest posts. This practice has, in fact, been usual in the Armed Forces. It will be necessary to grant to such men, who have given many of the best years of their lives to the public service, pensions sufficient to keep them from poverty and to mark the fact that no disgrace is implied by their retirement.

10. Being liable to spend a large part of their lives abroad and being subject to transfer between London and posts abroad, members of the Foreign Service, of all branches, will be involved in a good deal of expense which does not fall on home civil servants, who can count on spending their careers in this country and are able to plan their lives on a long-term basis. Grants will accordingly be necessary to compensate officers, who have served abroad, for any extra expense arising from their transfer to the United Kingdom. Officers serving abroad must be ensured emoluments sufficient to enable them not only to represent this country effectively but also to form a wide range of contacts. The effective representation of this country abroad will, moreover, involve the provision of adequate Government buildings for Missions and Consulates, as well as adequate staffs, and it will be essential, after the war, to remember that economies on buildings and staffs are false economies if they result in impaired efficiency, or in



reduced security for confidential papers. Arrangements will be made for the more efficient administration of the Service, for the inspection of all posts abroad and for the maintenance of fuller records on which to base recommendations to the Secretary of State for appointments, transfers or retirements on pension.

11. These reforms will cost money. But the additional expense will be a very small price to pay for a thoroughly efficient Foreign Service such as can contribute appreciably to the avoidance of international conflict. It is in the hope of creating such a Service that it is proposed to introduce the reforms which are summarised in greater detail below.

### SUMMARY OF PROPOSED REFORMS

#### 1.—*Amalgamation of the Services and Regrading of Posts*

12. After the last war the Foreign Office was amalgamated with the Diplomatic Service, but the Commercial Diplomatic and Consular Services remained separate, and the Foreign Office was still regarded as part of the Home Civil Service. The result was that the free interchange between posts of different types, which is essential if all men are to get the wider training and experience that are so desirable, and if the best man is to be made available for any particular post, was hindered, and members of the Commercial Diplomatic and Consular Services were only in exceptional cases able to reach the highest posts. In the new Service most officers will have to spend the greater part of their careers abroad, and the Foreign Office will in future be regarded as one of the posts and as the headquarters of the Foreign Service rather than as a department of the Home Civil Service. The amalgamation of the separate Services into one complete and independent Foreign Service will, it is believed, broaden the training (in its fullest sense) by combining knowledge of economic, industrial and shipping affairs with practical experience of dealing with the public and the Press and with the wider appreciation of international relations which is the field of diplomacy. The functions of diplomatic officers accredited to a foreign Government must continue in many respects to differ from those of consular officers. The number of consular posts must continue to exceed that of diplomatic posts. But the maintenance of the present disparity between the numbers of the diplomatic and the consular posts would make an effective amalgamation impossible. It would mean that if there were to be any equality of conditions of service all officers would obtain a predominantly consular experience and training. This would be to the detriment of the political work of the Service. It will, therefore, be necessary to increase the number of diplomatic officers and to reduce the number of consular officers. It will in any case be necessary to increase the size of the diplomatic staffs if Missions abroad are to be strong enough to make our influence more widely felt, and if officers, being no longer tied to their desks, are to be enabled to extend the range of their contacts. New arrangements will be made for staffing consular posts of lesser importance, and by regrouping and reorganising posts and making use of improved communications by air, adequate and effective consular representation will be ensured.

13. By facilitating the transfer to the Foreign Office of senior officers of experience, more effective interchange between posts at home and abroad will become the rule with the result that members of the Foreign Service will be able to keep in touch with developments at home and the Secretary of State will be able to employ the most suitable officer at any particular post at home or abroad. This will involve the provision of similar salaries for officers of similar rank whether they are employed at home or in foreign posts; it will also involve an increase in the number of posts at home and the upgrading of posts in the Foreign Office which carry responsibilities greater than should properly devolve on men of the rank now attaching to them. Furthermore, it is desirable to improve the prospects of promotion in the subordinate ranks of the Foreign Service and to upgrade the status of certain consular and commercial diplomatic posts of incontestable

importance in order that they may be held by officers of the experience and standing which the posts merit.

## II.—*Recruitment and Training*

14. In the conduct of international affairs much depends upon the personal relations which a foreign representative succeeds in establishing with the Government and people of the country concerned. In the choice of officers for the Foreign Service particular attention must therefore be paid to the personality and character of the candidates while ensuring that they possess the intellectual capacity and the knowledge of foreign countries and foreign languages, of modern history and economics necessary for their career. This knowledge can with difficulty be acquired without special study such as to-day requires the assistance of private means. This requirement places a limitation on the field of selection of candidates which cannot be accepted. The new scheme of recruitment and training will therefore consist of a preliminary competitive entrance test designed so that it can be taken without special study, followed by a period of training abroad at the expense of the State. At the end of this studentship period candidates will be examined in their special subjects, and, if they qualify, will become members of the Foreign Service. They will then undergo a year's training in this country, part of which will be spent in the Foreign Office and part in getting a grounding in economic, commercial and social questions. The present preliminary Foreign Office Selection Board will be abolished.

15. The entrance examination will thus be taken in two parts. The first will be taken between the ages of 21 and 23, and the majority of the vacancies will be filled by means of an open competitive examination (Method 1). While it is not considered that an entry based upon selection alone would ensure that candidates possess the necessary intellectual qualities, it is proposed, as an experimental measure, that candidates for a proportion of the vacancies should be chosen by a method based mainly on selection (Method 2). In order to be able, in exceptional cases, to recruit persons who by their record since completing their education have shown themselves specially suitable for the Foreign Service, the Secretary of State shall have power, on the recommendation of the Civil Service Commissioners, to accept for the Foreign Service not more than two entrants a year above the normal age limit, but not above the age of 30. Such entrants will be chosen by a selection board and will not be required to pass a written examination.

16. For those who compete by Method 1 there will be an open competitive examination conducted by the Civil Service Commission and so designed that candidates will be able to take it shortly after their University degree examination and without special study. Although designed for those who have studied at a University in this country, the examination will be open, as at present, to candidates who have not attended a University. This examination will be similar to that for the Home and Indian Civil Services in order that candidates may compete for all or any of the Services and that a larger number of candidates may therefore be encouraged to compete.

17. There are men of character and ability who are not good examinees and whose qualities do not show themselves to advantage in a written examination. It is important to widen as far as possible the field of selection and Method 2 has accordingly been designed to secure the services of suitable candidates who might otherwise prefer to accept some post, outside Government service, which would depend not upon a written examination but upon personality and record. This method is also designed to enable due weight to be given to the claims of character and personality as distinct from mere ability to pass written examinations. For an experimental period of ten years candidates for not more than 25 per cent. of the annual vacancies will be chosen mainly by selection on the basis of their records, of their showing before an interview board (at which they will be required to reach a really

high qualifying standard), and of a written examination in the English subjects compulsory for Method 1. Candidates who compete by this method will be required to have reached a certain educational standard. A candidate will be free to compete by either or both of these Methods in the same year. At the end of the experimental period it will be possible to determine whether Method 2 has been a success and whether it should be terminated or modified in any way.

18. Candidates who compete successfully by either method will be given travelling studentships from public funds for 18 months in order that, under due supervision, they may study at least two languages abroad, together with history and economics, and acquire the necessary familiarity with life in countries other than their own.

19. The second part of the examination will be held at the end of the studentship period when candidates will have to pass a qualifying examination in the subjects studied during that period. In each part of the examination candidates will have to qualify at an interview before a board constituted by the Civil Service Commission with Foreign Service representation. The object of these interviews will be to assess the candidate's personal suitability for the Foreign Service.

20. Candidates who qualify will become members of the Foreign Service subject to one year's probationary period of work in this country. Half of this period will be spent in the Foreign Office. The other half will be spent in the study of economic, industrial and social questions in other Government Departments dealing with these affairs and in visiting centres of industry or in other suitable ways. The period will include study of labour questions. This training is not aimed at producing experts in economic and social questions but at ensuring that all members of the new Service have a good general understanding of such matters and a foundation on which to build up specialised knowledge if necessary. At the end of this period men will be posted to Missions and Consulates abroad.

21. Provision will be made for ensuring an adequate supply of officers for posts in oriental countries. The importance of a knowledge of oriental as well as of Latin and Slavonic languages and the need for ensuring that all juniors have as wide an experience as possible will be borne in mind in the training period and in the posting of officers in the early years of their service.

22. The provision made for the training of candidates in economic and commercial affairs and the fact that all officers will be liable to serve in commercial diplomatic and consular as well as political posts, should ensure that all members of the Service possess at least a general knowledge and understanding of ordinary economics and of commercial practice. It is felt that, in these circumstances, the appointment to Missions abroad of expert advisers in commercial affairs from outside the Service may be unnecessary and might, indeed, be undesirable since it would imply that these questions were outside the province of the Foreign Service officer. It is hoped, indeed, that the general level of ability and training of members of the Service will be such that none of them will feel obliged to make an essential part of their work the exclusive province of experts. It will, however, be necessary for Heads of Missions to have expert assistance in technical matters, and advisers on economic, labour, agricultural and other questions will be attached to them when this is in the public interest.

23. In order further to widen the experience of members of the Foreign Service and to ensure that they should be kept in close touch with developments in this country, arrangements will be made to attach officers to other Government departments, such as those concerned with commercial and labour questions, for the purpose of training before taking up appointments abroad or whilst on leave. The seconding or appointment of Foreign Service officers to posts in other Government departments and vice versa will not be excluded when it can be shown to be useful to the public service, and the

appointment to posts in the Foreign Service of men from outside the Government service will be considered in exceptional cases.

24. In addition, it is intended to continue and develop the arrangements by which Foreign Service officers may be appointed to United Kingdom posts in the Dominions, whether in the High Commissioner's or the Trade Commissioner's offices. It is also intended to promote closer contact between the Foreign Service and the Colonial Service. It is hoped to facilitate understanding of questions of strategy and Imperial defence by making arrangements for members of the Foreign Service to be attached to the Imperial Defence College in larger numbers than before the war.

### III.—*Conditions of Service at Home*

25. Most members of the Service will spend the greater part of their careers abroad, sometimes in distant and unhealthy posts. Their situation must, therefore, be considered not as that of men employed in this country, who may occasionally be posted away from home, but rather as that of men who spend most of their careers abroad and are only occasionally posted at home. At present, when transferred to London, Foreign Service officers are subjected not only to personal inconvenience but also to distinct financial disadvantages. Thus, they normally incur considerable indirect expenditure over their transfer, while the comparatively short period for which they may be kept in this country and the uncertainty of their future movements makes it necessary for them to plan their lives on a short-term basis. They thus incur greater expenditure over housing, the education of children, etc., than officials who reside permanently in this country and can plan their future with greater certainty. Moreover Foreign Service officers posted to London should not, if they are to do their work properly, be obliged, through lack of means, to cut themselves off from contact with foreign representatives or from those wider contacts which are necessary if they are to be effective representatives of this country when they go abroad again.

26. While it is not suggested that the Foreign Service officer at headquarters should be required to lead the same representative life as his colleague abroad, it would clearly be inequitable if he were to suffer financially as a result of the conditions under which he serves. If assistance from public funds is to be given to enable persons without private means to compete for the new Service, in order that the basis of recruitment may be widened, it is clearly necessary that such persons should be able to live on their emoluments when once they are in the Service, whether abroad or at home. This they will be unable to do if full account is not taken of their special circumstances.

27. It is accordingly proposed that members of the Foreign Service should be paid a special grant on transfer to London.

### IV.—*Administration*

28. For the administration of the new Service it is proposed to appoint an additional Deputy Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office to relieve the Permanent Under-Secretary of administrative and non-political work. Under this officer all questions concerning appointments in the Service will be handled by a Personnel Department which will keep systematic records of every member of the Service based on reports and on personal contacts. Regular inspection of consular posts is already the rule; it will henceforth be applied to diplomatic Missions as well. The Personnel Department will furnish information for the Promotions Board which will advise the Secretary of State on the higher appointments. Because of the amalgamation of the Commercial Diplomatic Service with the new Foreign Service, the Board of Trade and the Department of Overseas Trade will be represented on the Promotions Board when the higher appointments to Commercial Diplomatic posts are under consideration. To advise the Foreign Secretary in cases of retirement on pension before the age of 60, it is proposed to establish a special board under the chairmanship of a former senior member of the Service.

V.—*Superannuation Bill*

With improved arrangements for the entry and training of candidates for the Foreign Service and the establishment of more systematic machinery for making appointments, cases of officers being found unsuitable for service in the highest ranks should, in future, be rare. It is, however, necessary for the reasons stated in paragraph 9 that the Foreign Secretary should, now and in the future, have the power to terminate, by retirement on pension before the normal age of 60, the services of officers of the rank of First Secretary, or its equivalent, and upwards, who, though they have committed no fault meriting dismissal, prove unsuited for posts of the highest responsibility and cannot be found other employment in the Government service. At present the Foreign Secretary has not this power. He is able only to place men on the unemployed list, leaving them without pay or pension, and is therefore subject to considerable pressure to employ a man even though he feels that he is unsuitable. It has accordingly been decided to submit to Parliament a Bill which will give the Foreign Secretary the necessary powers and will provide for suitable compensation.

30. This Bill is aimed at meeting only the immediate needs of the Service. It will be replaced after the war by a comprehensive Foreign Service Superannuation Bill designed to meet the needs of the new Foreign Service. The comprehensive Bill will have not only to ensure to the Secretary of State the power to terminate on pension the services of men unfit for the highest posts but also to remove certain anomalies which result in unequal treatment, to revise the basis on which the pensions of the Foreign Service have hitherto been calculated and to make suitable provision for the pensions of members of the subordinate branches of the Service. The necessary legislation will be submitted to Parliament as soon as possible after the war.

VI.—*Subordinate Staff*

31. For the reasons given in paragraph 8 it is intended that the new Foreign Service shall include not only the Diplomatic, Commercial Diplomatic and Consular Services but also the subordinate branches. All members of the new Service will be pensionable and will be liable for service abroad as well as at home. Being liable for service abroad the subordinate members of the Service will be subject to the same extra expense, resulting from transfer to London as well as from uncertainty of tenure at home, as members of the senior branch. It is therefore intended that they should receive, on transfer to the Foreign Office, grants comparable to those payable to the latter.

32. In addition to the higher posts which will be available in the subordinate branches themselves, it is also proposed that junior subordinate employees of exceptional merit shall be considered with other candidates competing for posts in the senior branch by Method 2 (see paragraph 17). Provision will further be made for the promotion of more senior employees, who have proved their suitability, to posts in the senior branch.

VII.—*Admission of Women*

33. Women are not at present eligible for posts in the administrative branch of the Foreign Office or in the Diplomatic, Commercial Diplomatic or Consular Services. For the duration of the war, all regular entry into the Service is suspended. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has, however, already announced his readiness to regard the report of the Committee which, in 1934, examined the question of the admission of women into the Foreign Service, as no longer necessarily closing the last word on the subject, and to consider, after the war, the appointment of a Committee, which will not be confined in its composition to members of the Civil Service, to review the question again in the light of the existing circumstances. In the subordinate branches of the Service women will continue to be employed as at present.

### CONCLUSION

34. The problems dealt with by the Foreign Service are far-reaching. They often involve issues of peace and war and other national interests of the greatest importance. The results of a mistake or even of inadequacy may involve a costly disaster. Diplomacy is but one of the weapons of which His Majesty's Government dispose for the protection of British interests. It is, however, a weapon which, if effective, may make unnecessary the resort to other weapons. His Majesty's Government believe that the proposed reforms—the most important heads of which are summarised above—will materially contribute to render the Foreign Service more effective, and they therefore trust that the proposals will meet with the approval of Parliament.

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